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ABSTRACT

Intended for those interested in scientific research in journalism, the papers in this volume focus on conditions of journalism, journalism and reality, and methodology. The papers discuss the following topics: (1) research on the contents of newspapers and the working conditions for editorial staff; (2) the meanings and functions of audience in mass communication; (3) house organs in Yugoslavia; (4) political structure and representational form in United States and Italian television news; (5) the crisis of Norwegian journalism; (6) television news as a cultural discourse; (7) "the personal problem" or neo-moralism, alcohol and journalism; and (8) the program leader's persona in TV-information programs.
(HOD)

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN JOURNALISM RESEARCH

LARS FURHOFF AND PERTTI HEMANUS
EDITORS

A selection of papers from the April 1985 colloquium
held in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, on Research in Journalism;
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NEW DIRECTIONS IN JOURNALISM RESEARCH

FOREWORD:

To laymen, we suppose, the concept of research in journalism is probably synonymous, or nearly so, with the concept of mass communication research. In reality however, the former constitutes only a small part of the latter, with the questions of mass communication research continuously increasing and becoming more heterogenous due to rapid developments in the field. At international conferences, seminars, and in journals for mass communication research, little attention is usually devoted to research in journalism.

Primarily for this reason the series of colloquia on "Research in Journalism" was started at the Inter-University Centre of Postgraduate Studies in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. The first was held 23rd to 27th of April, 1984, and the second 29th of April to 3rd of May, 1985. The next colloquium will be held in Spring 1986 and gradually, we hope, we shall be able to speak of a tradition.

In this volume some of the papers from the first two meetings are published for the audience interested in scientific research in journalism. The papers have been selected by us according to the criterion of representativeness. In other words: we try to give a picture of different approaches to questions of journalism discussed at the two colloquia. In the collection of papers the reader will of course not find any coherent theory of journalism -- this cannot be the aim of seminar reports or conference proceedings in general either.

Journalism can be seen as a cutting point of many forces. However

important we perceive the subject and personality of the journalist to be for his or her products, journalism is also a phenomenon to a large extent determined by society as a whole. Consequently, four of the papers in this volume are published under the heading Conditions of Journalism. One of the main tasks of journalism, again, can be termed as describing reality. The various journalistic forms of communication are in a way subordinate to this aim. Therefore three of the papers have been put in the category Journalism and Reality. Because of the huge importance of methodology in all scientific work a paper on this subject has been included in the volume.

Some of the papers have been abbreviated by the authors themselves. The reference system in the papers follows those in the originals; in other words it has not been standardised.

We would like to acknowledge the help given by Roland Stanbridge of the School of Journalism, University of Stockholm, in checking and improving the language of this publication.

Lars Furhoff
Stockholm

Pertti Hemánus
Tampere

NEW DIRECTIONS IN JOURNALISM RESEARCH

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CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISM

Research on the contents of newspapers and
the working conditions for editorial staff.

LARS FURHOFF

Rector. The School of Journalism
University of Stockholm.

Mass media should, according to doctrine, fulfil their task independently of all other power groups in society. Consequently one of the most urgent tasks of the mass media is to scrutinise everybody that exercises public or private power.

This doctrine can, of course, not be fulfilled in practice. Government bodies influence the work of the mass media in various ways. Those holding private power can influence the work of the editorial staff, for example in their capacities as newspaper owners, advertisers or sources of information. The editorial staff is as a rule part of a profit-seeking company. This makes it necessary to take into consideration various groups in society which can influence the commercial success of the newspaper company.

These circumstances should be kept in mind when one studies the work of the editorial staff. The influences arising from society and from the newspaper company are so important that they deserve some further elaboration.

Influences from society

Mass communication is a necessary activity in our societies. An efficient mass communication is also necessary for the functioning of much less complicated societies than our own.

Mass communication is needed to oil the wheels of society. Without mass communication there would inevitably be conflicts in society because the citizens would lack important information. There would be dangerous differences of opinion on important issues. For one thing mass communication has the task of making public such information as the citizens need for practical purposes. For another thing it has the important task of creating such a consensus that the conflicts in society can be settled on peaceful terms. Newspapers have, in addition, the important task of raising consumption, above all by carrying advertisements.

By studies of the editorial contents and by questioning the audience you can see to what extent the mass media fulfil their tasks. By such studies you

can get answers to questions like:

- the importance of the mass media for the political community (political parties, government, public authorities),
- the importance of the mass media for the financial community,
- the importance of the mass media for the community at large (pressure groups, etc).

Studies of the editorial contents can reveal the traces of the influence of these three groupings. They cannot, however, reveal how these influences have come about.

Some answers can be found by studying the open control of the mass media:

- judgment in libel actions,
- judgment in court for the ethical supervision of the mass media,
- the sources of income for the mass media (including government subsidies) and their open influence on the work of the editorial staff.

Such studies give, however, a brief and incomplete outline, which is a serious shortcoming. Studies of the open sources reveal direct violations and conspicuous forms of influence. But one does not thereby detect the daily considerations taken by the editorial staff in order to avoid reprisals. Experience shows that such considerations have great effect on the editorial contents.

It seems thus evident that the only way to achieve a complete picture of the three communities' influences on the media is to study the work of the editorial staff. By such studies one can measure to what extent the editorial contents are influenced by elements such as:

- the law of libel,
- code of ethics,
- taking account of advertisers,
- taking account of owners,
- taking account of the rules governing government subsidies,
- laws regulating, for example the rights of the staff to have a voice in decision-making and job protection,
- taking account of sources in the political, financial and the civil communities.

The newspaper company

The newspaper company is not as separate from the rest of society as it may seem. It is, in fact, representatives of the three "societies" that to a great extent own the newspapers.

Studies of the editorial contents can answer several questions regarding the newspaper company. For example they can reveal how competition between newspapers influences the editorial contents. The propaganda motive of the newspaper owner is also recognisable.

Studies of the editorial contents can, however, only describe what the contents are like. They cannot say anything certain about the causes. Thus they should be complemented by studies of the work of the editorial staff. In such studies one can look at elements like:

- editorial consideration of the advertising market (for example articles by journalists that serve as publicity for advertisers),
- editorial consideration of the circulation market (for example priority to sensational contents when circulation is falling),
- editorial consideration of the competitors,
- editorial consideration of the propaganda motive of the owner,
- editorial consideration of the profit motive of the owner (both by means of a journalism that raises circulation and priority to contents that are cheap to produce).

The editorial department

The work of the editorial department can to a great extent be seen as the effect of the above-mentioned elements in connection with the society and the newspaper company. It is, however, influenced by some further elements: the professional ideals of journalists, the status of the journalists in the editorial department and the traditions of the newspaper.

It is probably most illuminating to complement limited studies of the editorial contents with studies of the editorial process which resulted in such contents. Then we will have achieved a more complete picture, a picture that makes it possible not only to judge the contents under inspection but also, ideally, to take measures to achieve better contents. The weakness of such

a research strategy is the need for reconstructions, which leads to difficulties in the critical treatment of sources.

It is thus most important to describe the editorial processes of different media. If these studies are conducted thoroughly they can probably be used in the future to illuminate the results of ongoing studies of the editorial contents.

We cannot study the editorial work simply by interviews with journalists. Journalism is a verbal profession and experience shows that journalists can easily adjust their answers to the doctrines of mass communication. Thus interviews are hard to interpret.

It is instead necessary to follow the editorial work by participation observation. Most certainly it is important not to restrict the observation to one journalist. He can easily adjust his work to the fact that he is observed. If possible one should instead observe the whole editorial staff. This collective cannot adjust its judgments and routines to any significant degree. In that unlikely case the readers would not recognise the newspaper of the day in question.

Of course the observation ought to include interviews. But these ought to be interviews on the basis of observation and of the articles that are produced during the day. Then sources can be treated in a sufficiently critical way.

It seems that observations connected with interviews could describe most of the elements that are vital:

- the professional ideals of the journalists,
- the influence of the traditions of the newspaper and of journalism in general,
- the influence of the policy of the newspaper (as a rule not outspoken and not written),
- the process of adaptation of newly recruited journalists,
- the position of established journalists; degree of independence, degree of hurry in their work, degree of consideration ("self-censorship") etc,
- the impetus for the articles,
- how duties are assigned to the journalists and how possible instructions are formulated,
- sources used by the journalists and the reason for choosing those sources,

- how facts are gathered,
- considerations in the process of writing: omission of information and the reasons for this action etc,
- alterations in the editing,
- reactions after publishing from colleagues, from sources and from readers.

Some results

To give more substance to this theoretical discussion it is necessary to briefly survey the research on the conditions of editorial staff and on newspaper contents that has been conducted at the school for the professional training of journalists at the university of Stockholm.

The field work has been done by the students, mostly during their term of practice which lasts for four months.

Compared to the international literature the reports of the students have an exceptionally broad empirical foundation. Observations have been made on a great number of editorial departments during six succeeding terms. At least 50 departments have been observed each term. The students are very familiar with editorial work. At the same time they can, due to the situation, keep distance from the department in question.

The reports of the students are, however, inferior to the international literature in one respect. Only one element of the editorial work has been observed each term. Thus the observers have not been able to grasp the whole picture as is the case in some of the more distinguished international works. On the other hand, almost all the departments have been observed during each of the six terms: This makes it possible to secure a general picture from the six different reports.

The present results give an almost complete and empirically supported picture of the editorial work. The results are more uncertain when it comes to the causes of the present situation and the elements which determine the present contents of the newspapers.

Thus the results will be presented in two sections. The first part will include a description of the editorial work in the newspapers. The second part includes a discussion of some possible explanations.

The editorial work

The description of the editorial work follows the working process, from the impetus for an article to the reactions once the article has been published.

Initiatives

Four "degrees of activity" were used when we studied the impetus for articles.

1. Tips. This category includes tips from readers, impulses from earlier articles in newspapers or from broadcasts on radio and television and ideas originating from the editorial staff. These tips are usually vague and demand as a rule considerable editorial effort before they can result in any news story.

In this category there are very few tips from readers. These tips deal with harmless events like the first spring flower.

Impulses from newspapers, radio and television are a very common category. You can in fact see a "tour" of news from newspapers to radio and often back to newspapers. This "tour" is natural for important news stories but it was also visible for ephemeral matter.

Ideas from the editorial staff were most common among tabloid newspapers. In the rest of the press this category is unexpectedly rare. In this category you find matter serving the classical watch-dog function of the press. You can also find background articles analyzing present events and long term processes in society.

2. Watching. This category includes all watching of the activities of government and local bodies, of companies and of associations of various kinds. This watching consists of a constant inspection of files and other sources of information. It does not always result in news stories. The editorial effort behind every article is often considerable.

This category was twice as common in the metropolitan papers as in the rural papers. This can partly be explained by the existence of the cooperative news agency ("Tidningarnas telegrambyrå") which has the duty to watch parliament, government and government bodies on behalf of the rural papers.

Rural newspapers watched the local authorities. Tabloid newspapers watched very closely police departments and prosecutors. All other kinds of watching were rare. None of the newspapers watched the companies. Associations were watched in only one metropolitan newspaper.

3. Invitation. This category includes articles originating from invitations or suggestions from government and local authorities, associations and companies. These invitations and suggestions are based on a belief that one has something newsworthy to offer. Thus the working conditions are more advantageous than they are when one is watching.

This is the most common origin for articles in all newspapers except the tabloid papers. Invitations are most frequent from associations. Not less than 22% of the news material in the rural papers originated from invitations from associations. The articles about companies originated entirely from invitation.

4. Telegram. This category includes copy from different news agencies and contributions from freelance journalists and readers (excluding letters to the editor).

The category is most common in the rural papers and hardly exists in the tabloid papers. Only in the metropolitan papers choice of telegrams could one trace the established criteria of news value (see Galtung/Ruge, Prække). The selection of telegrams in the rural papers seemed entirely accidental. In the tabloids selection was more influenced by commercial consideration than is implied by the established criteria.

The main conclusion of the investigations of initiatives is that newspapers depend to a considerable degree on initiatives from outside. Ideas from the editorial staff and routine watching played everywhere a lesser role than various forms of initiative from outside.

On this basis the contents of the newspaper were studied. The Swedish parliament has - in agreement with the association of newspaper owners and the trade union of journalists - established that mass media have certain functions in the democratic process. The contents of newspapers were compared to three of these functions established by parliament.

The function of information means that mass media ought to give the citizens the information necessary to form an opinion on current issues in society. Mass media ought to give representatives on various levels current information about the political opinions of private citizens and associations.

There is a considerable imbalance of information in the newspapers: it mainly concerns public authorities and associations while information about companies is rather modest. There is, however, another and perhaps more serious deficiency: the information mostly concerns established decisions. It is rather rare that information is given so early that the citizens have a chance to take part in the democratic process of decision making. The information to the representatives is almost entirely lacking: reports from the meetings of churches and local associations cannot in any way be said to fulfil this function.

These findings regarding how information functions are predictable from the origin of the articles, i.e. mostly by invitation from outside.

The function of surveillance means that mass media ought to scrutinize and prevent excesses by those who exercise power in society. In this function mass media act as representatives of the citizens. This function was very rarely performed in the newspapers studied, and was carried out only in relation to public authorities. Companies and associations were not scrutinised at all. This finding was also predictable from the studies on the origin of news.

The function of group communication means that mass media ought to encourage communication between political, trade unionist and idealist groups in society.

In the studied newspapers one cannot trace this function at all.

Sources =====

After all initiative comes the gathering of facts from various sources.

By far the most common sources are verbal. These are used even in cases when there are written sources available. Sometimes a verbal source is engaged only to give an account of the contents of a document. Officials in local and government bodies are dominant among the verbal sources. The special

fondness for verbal sources is partly explained by lack of time (it takes time to go to a written source). It is also explained by the need for comments that can be quoted in the article and by a wish to get as fresh information as possible.

The system with verbal sources is often simplified. The specialised journalists have a network of "contacts", verbal sources who spontaneously contact the journalist when they have news to offer. The network consists as a rule of people who are anxious for publicity. More serious is that the journalists estimate that one third of these sources would "dry up" if anything negative were to be printed about their activities. This makes it most difficult to treat these sources in a critical way. It can happen that material without news value is published only to maintain these sources in cheerful spirits. The journalists are in other words in a weak position in relation to their network of contacts.

The most common written sources are the journalists' "own" newspaper or other mass media. This reinforces the "tour" of news mentioned earlier. Besides it has the effect that errors in the media are compounded, especially as the newspapers lack routines for correcting errors in the file of cuttings. In the next place come documents from local and government bodies, which corresponds with the examination of the initiatives.

One can distinguish some common processes of fact gathering:

- Fact gathering after established patterns.
- Superiors prescribe the process of fact gathering.
- Colleagues give suggestions.
- The network of contacts governs the process.
- The sources govern.
- One source gives the other.

The journalists are well aware of the shortcomings of the established routines. They would prefer to use written sources more frequently. They would prefer to use additional verbal sources in order to check facts and to get a more balanced picture. They suggest various means of improving the situation: better informed journalists, more unity among journalists etc.

Case studies have revealed that the situation is not satisfactory. Among

frequent deficiencies are the following:

- Errors explained by carelessness and haste.
- Precipitate judgments
- Wrong interpretation of statistics.
- Uncritical treatment of suspicious sources.
- Badly prepared choice of sources.
- Insufficient criticism of sources that want to manipulate newspapers.

The writing

Then comes the writing of the article. First the journalist has to decide what position ("angle") he should take in the article. Then he has to create the article linguistically.

In the first phase of the writing process the mechanisms of self-censorship are of great importance. Self-censorship means either that one excludes information vital to the reader, that one knowingly slants an article, or that one writes about events that have no news value. All this is done against better judgment.

Self-censorship may have four different causes:

- Self-censorship because of limitations to the newspaper's frame of reference.
- Self-censorship because of the demands of the sources.
- Self-censorship because of own conviction
- Self-censorship because of one's colleagues.

In one report from the students there are more than 300 proven examples of self-censorship because of these four reasons.

Self-censorship because of limitations operative inside the newspaper can have a lot of different explanations:

- the interests of the owner, either an interest of propaganda or an interest to protect vital parts of the activities the owner represents,
- part-owners (even such holding very few shares) interest to keep vital parts of their activities free of criticism,
- the interests of the heads of the editorial department in governing the publicity, sometimes an interest quite independent from the owner's,

- demands of loyalty towards the newspaper company and colleagues,
- consideration of the presumed reaction of the readers,
- adaptation to the traditional policy of the newspaper or other editorial guidelines that can be so well established that not even the owner in the short run can alter them,
- reasons of cost,
- technical limitations,
- understaffing,
- lack of time (news coming in late),
- taking account of advertisers,
- fear of trouble, libel cases etc,
- generally accepted demands of form, for example the demand for shortness which results in dramatization and fragmentization,
- conformity with other media,
- ignorance of the journalists which leads to an adherence to an assumed common viewpoint which goes further than necessary,
- the desire to find a "selling" journalism,
- the journalist's wish to make a career which can lead to a wish to "sell" the articles by means of exaggeration etc,
- the professional degradation of journalists which can lead to exaggerations etc because of cynicism or lasting professional injury,
- the journalist's unawareness that he is censoring himself.

Self-censorship because of the demands of the sources is caused by the journalist's weak position resulting from work haste, lack of knowledge and the lack of openness of the private sector of society. Thus this self-censorship reflects the journalist's dependent position - especially in relation to the network of contacts - mentioned earlier.

Self-censorship because of own conviction can for example depend on group pressure in the editorial department. It can also depend on a lack of awareness about the integrity demanded from a journalist or from conscious violations.

Self-censorship because of colleagues is rare in the report. This may be due to a wish not to violate the reputation of other journalists or a wish not to trespass in the domain of a colleague.

When the journalist comes to writing and shaping an article he has to stick to the norms that govern the department or sub-department. This adaptation is

very profound. Journalists who have written for several different newspapers and magazines have been studied. The articles reveal such differences in usage of language, in assessment of man and general attitudes that one is tempted to speak of a change in personality.

The norms of shaping have been mapped out in a number of case studies. They reveal that there are norms or patterns in every editorial department and sub-department and that they are constant for material of various kinds.

Editing

In our connection editing is in one respect without special interest, i.e. as long as it is an examination and correcting of the articles. This means only that the articles are brought into correspondence with the norms earlier mentioned. In this respect editing is a control station.

In another respect, however, editing is of an independent and profound importance. There are strict rules for editing. They deal among other things with the length of the article and with the type of articles that should get more space in the newspaper.

In this way editing governs the whole editorial process by its demands concerning form and contents. Even demands of form govern contents. It has already been mentioned that the demand for brevity means that one is forced to exclude vital information, that one can deal with only one aspect of a many-sided issue and that one can quote only a strictly limited number of sources.

Reactions after publishing

The reports reveal that sub-editors and higher principals seldom react to articles. This suggests that journalists understand how to adapt to the demands of the leadership.

The reports reveal that reactions from readers are rare. When they occur they usually refer to errors in articles.

19 Finally the reports reveal that the articles themselves are only occasionally

discussed in the editorial department. The discussion about the editorial product usually deals with layout, not with the information contained in the articles and even less with their shape as regards language and other aspects.

Explanations

The studies of the editorial work show that the newspapers fulfil their role in society in a very deficient way, at least if you take the standard set in the parliamentary decision of 1975 about the functions of mass media. What are the explanations for these deficiencies? Our studies have not given any definite answers. They have, however, given ground for discussion of some vital issues.

The attitudes of journalists

The attitudes of journalists have been examined twice: by means of interviews with active and retired journalists. This makes it possible to grasp the continuing evolution of attitudes.

The incentive to become a journalist was in the past - especially in the social democratic press - of a political kind. You enrolled in the staff of the newspaper and you enjoyed the opportunity to work for "truth and justice".

Among the active journalists political incentives are most rare. Instead they mention such things as a desire to express oneself in writing.

It is clear from the interviews that journalists had a very low status in the newspapers in the past. Ambitions were limited. The retired journalists call journalism passive and mere reporting.

The retired journalists feel that there has been an evolution of journalism during the past years. It has become better in quality and has gained considerably in independence and in the ambition to scrutinize the work of the power-holders in society. In most cases this evolution is approved of by the retired journalists. But they are eager to point out that the new journalism demands more from the journalists. More knowledge is necessary. Criticism of power-holders in society must be especially well founded. The new journa-

lism must not follow "trends" but must consider all sectors of society simultaneously.

The active journalists hold that criticism of the power-holders is a necessary aspect of journalism. They agree with the retired journalists that this activity is demanding. "Otherwise the criticism is easily shot down by men of power".

For the active journalists the ambition of journalism is in short to make the events and processes of society comprehensible to the readers so that they can form an opinion of their own. The active journalists protest without exception against tendencies to exercise propaganda or to give "pointers" in the articles. In this respect there is a definite change-over when one compares interviews with active and retired journalists. For the active journalists the goal is not to work for "truth and justice" but to make it possible for the reader to decide for himself on a foundation of relevant facts.

Accordingly the active journalists believe that the problem of objectivity in the mass media - in a pluralistic society - must be solved by giving a many-sided picture of the issues so that the reader can form an opinion on his own. They underline especially that one must not conceal facts contrary to one's own opinion.

The active journalists were asked what they would do if they had sufficient time and resources and had no limitations in other respects. Most of them answered that they, in that case, would do the same as now but better.

The deviant answers from these main trends are very few. Of special interest are, however, the answers from three journalists on tabloid newspapers. They were asked to characterize a good journalistic product and answered in the following way: "product selling copies", "simple and without analysis", "a newspaper selling damned well".

With these exceptions it seems reasonably clear that the journalism of today can hardly be explained by the attitudes of the journalists. If they were to decide, the newspapers would have different contents, more coherent with the parliamentary decision of 1975.

Organisation of the editorial department

It seems that the organisation of the editorial department has a great influence on the contents.

Of prime importance is the organisational structure. Everywhere in the newspaper world there is a hierarchical organisation. This means that the intentions of the leadership are impressed on every journalist.

The division into sub-departments for special topics and the establishment of journalists as specialists also govern the contents to a great extent.

This was evidently shown in a study of the biggest metropolitan paper ("Dagens Nyheter") and the spy case ("IB-affären"). The heads of the editorial department wanted the newspaper to conduct investigative reporting in this case and did not think there were obstacles to fulfilling the ambition. The newspaper did not, however, conduct any investigative reporting. The explanation was the division of the editorial staff into sub-departments, the "departmentalisation". This division was so complete that there were no journalists hand to conduct the necessary time-consuming investigative reporting.

This stiffness in the organisation can also be traced in studies concerning attempts to change the contents of newspapers. Only in exceptional cases have the planned changes been realised. As a rule the product remained unchanged, in spite of the opposite intentions.

Another element is that editorial departments - if you exclude the biggest newspapers - are as a rule understaffed in relation to the quantitative demands of production. The journalists simply find it difficult to find time to fill all the columns of the newspaper. Even less can they reach the quality demands that the reader has a right to make. In the biggest newspaper you can easily observe competition between the journalists. This competition is stimulated by the employer by such means as individual salaries, "encouragement travels" and such as "picture-byline", i.e. that the reporter gets his name and picture placed at the head of the article. This is not a competition of quality. It is instead a competition of presenting the most "selling" stuff.

There is no doubt that the news agencies and other media to a great extent govern the editorial work. The "tour" of news has been mentioned earlier.

It can be explained by the fact that every editorial department is influenced by the contents of the news agency telegrams, by radio news, television news and the leading newspapers.

This was shown drastically in a study of the foreign news in the biggest metropolitan newspaper ("Dagens Nyheter"). Special attention was paid to the performance of the foreign correspondents of the newspaper. When a correspondent is sent out to cover a new region he transmits articles that to a great degree concern social conditions and living conditions of the people. The published copy from the region increases. Gradually the interest seems to decrease. The newspaper prints considerably less from the region. The articles duplicate more and more the telegrams from the news agencies. The news machinery slides back into the same old rut.

Given the attitudes of the journalists you could expect a great deal of conflict in the editorial departments. At least the established journalists ought to fight constantly to get an opportunity to work in a more satisfactory way. All our reports show, however, that this is not the case. On the contrary, the editorial departments seem to be remarkably free from conflict.

It is not surprising that the newly recruited journalists adapt without grumbling to the established conditions. They seem to pass through a process of adaptation which is similar to those of other professions. It is, however, peculiar that this process of adaptation seems to continue during their whole professional career. Journalists who adapt well to the conditions are established and given favours. The fear of missing these favours forces these journalists to continue with the same cautiousness that they practiced in the beginning of their careers.

Costs

A great deal of the shortcomings of the contents of the newspapers seems to be explained by costs. When the editorial departments are understaffed there seems to be a tendency to prefer such material as needs little working time.

The studies of this element are based on few observations. But they show dramatically how, for example, the reports from associations in the rural papers are the stuff that need less working time in the editorial department. This is quite likely one of the explanations why these reports cover as much

as 22 % of the news columns.

Also the predominance of public bodies is partly explained by costs. Articles about companies are most time-consuming if you want anything else than the releases from the PR-departments. Companies in Sweden are not subject to the principle of openness that governs the public bodies. On the contrary they are governed by the principle of secrecy, which makes the work of the journalist difficult and time-consuming.

Motives of the owner

The costs have of course direct connection to the owner's financial motive, to reach as high a profit as possible or to minimize losses.

There is, however, no newspaper owner who does not have ideological motives in addition. Also newspapers that declare themselves to be "independent" have in fact a general bourgeois outlook.

The owner's ideological motive is directly contrary to the journalists' view that it should be left to the reader to form his own opinion, without "pointers".

Professional knowledge

Journalists have a considerable professional knowledge. It is not primarily a handicraft skill but a knowledge about the role of journalism in society and the demands of a journalism that serves society in a proper way. Among other things this knowledge includes the capacity to ask the citizen's - not the expert's - questions on every issue. As the citizens's questions are mostly political this may lead to conflicts with sources of various kinds.

This would be no problem if the professional knowledge of journalists - and with it the role of journalism in society - was respected in society as a whole. This is not the case. On the contrary this professional knowledge is not always respected even within the newspaper companies.

Knowledge of subjects

24 There are still among journalists traces from the old anti-intellectual tradition that the best journalists should have no more knowledge than his readers.

But nowadays most active journalists stress the need for thorough knowledge about different subjects.

The general education of Swedish journalists was examined in 1969. It appeared that the general degree of knowledge was low. It has certainly been a little better since then, but there has been no substantial rise.

The lack of knowledge about different subjects makes journalists inferior to their sources. Furthermore journalists may have difficulties grasping the subject at hand. This may lead to an article that not even an expert can understand.

As mentioned journalists should put the citizen's questions to the expert. If this leads to conflict the journalist is weak both before the expert and before the newspaper leadership as he lacks knowledge of the subject under conflict.

Influence on decisions

That journalists have a weak position is clearly shown in a study of their influence on decisions in 45 editorial departments.

Most remarkable is that the journalists had nowhere achieved any influence over the long-term guidelines for the editorial contents.

None of the departments had a concrete and written policy. This deficiency fortifies the inferiority of the journalists.

A concrete and written policy should state the limits for the journalists and preclude arbitrary treatment by the newspaper leadership. This policy is also a necessary basis for discussion if the journalists want to change the guidelines for the contents. Thus it is the journalists who would benefit from an established policy. The employer may have his own good reasons to protect more flexible conditions, especially as experience shows that journalists under such conditions do not act against the employer's intentions. On the contrary everybody tries to keep inside the unspoken limits, and that with a great margin. The employer has in other words every reason to prefer a policy that "sits in the walls" rather than a concrete and written settlement.

Further research

The explanations of the current journalism are as you see less certain than the earlier description of editorial work. This is a consequence of the research situation: one aspect has been put in focus each term. The explanations are rarely connected to a concrete study of the contents. They are instead rather general observations.

Thus it is necessary to study contents and working conditions simultaneously. This is the only way to reveal what governs the contents of the newspapers.

On the meaning and functions of
audience in mass communication.

ZOLTAN JAKAB

There is a traditional body of hidden, untested assumptions in the theory and research of mass communication, belonging to the foundation of various current approaches both in scientific investigation and academic education of journalism. One of these assumptions can be formulated in the following way: the various ways of audience behaviour represent a highly set of complex problems worthy of scientific study, but the sociological nature of audiences and their functions in the system of mass communication are unproblematic from a theoretical point of view. Any audience, simply speaking, consists of "people out there" who are acted upon by the media and react e.g. by giving feedback to the communicators

1.1. The functioning of such an assumption can be inferred e.g. from the general scarcity of new theoretical works on audiences. The best of the relevant literature was published some 20 years ago -- Habermas, O.Groth, A.Hauser -- or even much earlier -- L. von Wiese, Tönnies.

1.2. The reasons for the development and endurance of this assumption seems to be of an institutional, organisational (e.g. audience research) and perhaps methodological nature.

1.3. There is a growing number of scholars and publications which bring to light, articulate and challenge this assumption on the basis of mainly empirical studies. This trend became discernable in the 1970s. Publications of a handful of British authors (Burns, McQuail, Schlesinger, Tracey), American (Cantor, Gans, Sigal), and others (Halse, Engwall, Barbic) are particularly relevant here.

2. The researches under consideration were carried out in considerably different cultural as well as organisational (film production, print media, television) settings. In spite of this and the differences of the sociological approaches, the basic experiences are strikingly similar.

2.1. There are three common forms of feedback from the large audience; letters, phone calls and audience figures.

Communicators usually belittle the letters and calls as irrelevant, unrepresentative and sometimes incomprehensible feedback given by "nuts" or housewives with too much spare time. Audience research data are often rejected because they are too abstract and useless in story selection. The communicators are usually suspicious of the reliability of the data, in some cases for the reason that they are provided by non-journalists.

2.2. The communicators don't really know their audiences. They scarcely appear to have a detailed image of readers or viewers, and seem to rather hold some vague stereotypes.

2.3. It seems to be a recurring experience that communicators don't consider it necessary to have a detailed image of their audiences, since this is of no use in the processes of message production. On the other hand they often believe they must give the audience what it really needs, not what it wants. Also, the communicators believe they know better what the needs of the audience are.

2.4. In a few cases the researchers made an attempt to describe more complex attitude patterns of the broadcasters toward the audiences. It seems to be a rare species of communicator who feels personal responsibility in relation to a large audience. More typically they declare the organisation to be responsible or reject the question of responsibility as irrelevant from the point of view of a professional.

2.5. There are certain surrogates of the large audience (e.g. secretaries in the editorial office, technicians in the studio) and casual representatives of the viewers, readers (e.g. unknown passers-by congratulating the reporter), and primary group members as audience representatives who sometimes seem to have a relatively significant impact on the communicators.

2.7. The research experience also sheds light on other types of audiences which have far more considerable influence on the communicators than the abovementioned ones. The superiors, colleagues in and outside of the organisation, members of the

political elite, the original sources of information used in the production of messages, other reference groups of experts, and advertisers are general examples of these audience types.

2.8. It seems to be plausible that these latter types of audiences have at least two characteristics in common which are lacking from the former types and are relevant to the communicators. All types listed here (2.7.) share certain sets of values with the communicators that belong to the system of professional values of journalists, broadcasters etc. On the other hand, these types of audiences have power, although to different degrees and in different forms.

2.9. Probably it would be too broad and unprecise usage of the term if we said that the large audience has power. It has very relevant functions and roles in relation to the media organisations. Besides the obvious commercial functions, it is the large audience for instance which offers a very important legitimation to the media. (This organisational, institutional relevance is powerfully brought to the attention of the communicators in various ways. This seems to be one of the reasons for the professional sensitivity of communicators, for example, to taste and moral taboos which they personally don't respect.

2.10. On the bases of the previous empirical experiences and assumptions it seems possible to make some hypothetical distinctions among the different types of audiences. One dimension can be called "relevance", along which personally, professionally relevant audiences can be distinguished from organisationally relevant ones. A second dimension can be "distance" with the opposite types of distant and near audiences. (Distance refers to the regularity of interactions and the similarity of the actors involved.) It should be emphasised here that these dichotomies are simplifications for brevity's sake. In a detailed logical analysis or empirical studies both dimensions should be interpreted as continua.

2.11. By using these dimensions, a tentative typology of audiences can be constructed:

	NEAR	DISTANT
Personally professionally relevant	1	2
Organisationally relevant	3	4

This scheme is rather crude and ambiguous on the present level of generality. The dubious elements of the following categorization disappear from a more concrete, elaborate form of the typology.

Cell 1 : Superiors, colleagues inside of the organisation;

Cell 2 : Colleagues outside of the organisation, reference groups of experts, primary group audience, surrogates and casual representatives of the large audience;

Cell 3 : Political elite, advertisers, original sources of information;

Cell 4 : Large audience

2.12. The assumption here is that the different types of audiences have in general different functions both in relation to the production of individual messages and to the overall functioning of media organisations as well as societal mass media systems.

2.13. Far from explaining, the organisational relevance of the large audience makes the attitudes of communicators towards viewers, readers etc, more problematic from a scientific point of view. (The empirical evidence mentioned above is usually abhorrent and/or unbelievable to everyday thinking). The studies under consideration point out or refer to the following elements of the situation:

- The large audience falls outside of the boundaries of any direct, personal experience because of its sheer size.
- Some of the audience feedbacks are boringly repetitive, some others are too general and the bulk of them are of no immediate use in the everyday work of the communicators.
- Nevertheless these feedbacks represent a potential threat to the professional autonomy and security of the communicators, who work under heavy pressures and exigencies of their

professional environment.

- There is only a handful of communicators benefitting considerably from the often unpredictable reactions of the large audience, while all communicators have to meet the expectations of their organisations, superiors, colleagues etc. in order to gain prestige, ascend the professional ladder and so on. These expectations don't make it necessary to have any sophisticated image of the audience.
- Stereotypes of the large audience are sufficient and useful in the course of everyday communicating activities and in the cases when legitimisation of personal decisions is needed.
- There might be some variations in these elements according to the size of the communication organisation, the department the communicator works in, the degree of competition among media organisations etc.

3. The present author carried out a series of semi-structured, non-standardised, tape recorded interviews with a representative quota sample of programme makers of Magyar Rádió (Hungarian Radio -- MR) during the second half of 1983. (62 broadcasters were interviewed.)

3.1. The interviews covered the most important stages of the production of individual programmes from the birth of basic ideas up to the decisions on the time-slot when the programme was to be broadcast. Attempts were made to gain a comprehensive overview of all possible and actual sources of feedback in terms of frequency, practical usefulness, social meaning and professional relevance. Several questions were asked concerning the information on audience needs, audience listening behaviour, composition of the audiences of the programmes produced etc. An elaborate part of the interviews dealt with the possible ways and means of taking the large audience into account in the process of programme production. There was an attempt to receive explications and interpretations of the roles and functions of various audiences in relation to the personal career of broadcasters. (The average duration of the interviews was 74 minutes).

3.2. The analysis of the interviews has not been finished yet. Some preliminary results and impressions can be summarised as follows:

-- The feedback sources, their evaluations, the information on audience needs and behaviour seem to be very similar in MR to the experiences gained in other countries.

-- There are some considerable differences in the attitudes towards the large audience according to programme production units on the one hand, and the age groups of the broadcasters.

-- A minority of the broadcasters makes frequent attempts to use scientific studies or audience figures as general or concrete orientation in certain aspects of professional activities. The majority seem to pay lip service to the usefulness of audience research. Another minority overtly rejects the idea of taking the large audience of laymen into account, saying that the expectations of expert reference groups establish the standards of programme quality.

-- Some professional considerations (e.g. clarity and linguistic intelligibility) and news values (e.g. importance, interest) are certainly at work, but no systematic account of the large audience is usually taken by the broadcasters on a conscious level in the process of programme production.

-- There are certain types of programmes (e.g. musical request programmes) that give the appearance of taking the audience into account, but the actual considerations of real importance are of a more professional nature.

-- There is strong competition among the programme makers on the one hand, and the departments on the other, in order to get 'better' time slots for their programmes. Slots are evaluated in terms of the supposed size of the audience, but the broadcasters' race has the aim of professional success and prestige, in reality.

-- The programme makers usually deny that the large audience could have an influence on their career or professional status.

-- It seems to be a widely accepted point of view that programme makers produce their messages first of all for the 'people', that is. the large audience.

4. Instead of premature attempts to explain systematically the situation outlined above, some theoretical problems might be formulated here. Theoretical questions seem to be appropriate and necessary for several reasons. The functions and roles of the large

audience as elements of mass communication systems are evidently of crucial, paradigmatic importance. It is probably true that these functions and roles have not been studied in a comprehensive way and the phenomena under consideration are remarkable enough to give rise to certain scientific uneasiness. On the other hand the data gathered so far don't form an elaborate picture of the relationships between the professional communicators and their various audiences. It cannot be taken for granted that the researchers have asked the relevant questions and that the communicators have understood and answered them as deeply and exhaustively as possible. Further researches, with theoretical questions to guide them, are needed.

4.1. From a methodological point of view, it should be examined carefully whether the professional communicators were and are really in the position to answer questions truthfully which pertain to the large audience. (In spite of certain experiences it might be possible that communicators take the large audience much more into account than they are able to communicate to researchers. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to talk about self-evident things.)

4.2. Self-evident things are taught and learned in the course of socialisation. It is possible that communicators learn and internalise various norms and techniques of taking the large audience into account during their professional socialisation, but they are not aware of them consciously.

4.3. The system and functioning of news values seem to be very relevant in this respect. News values are -- from one aspect -- shorthand descriptions of certain value and behavioural patterns related to the large audience. On the one hand, news values can be considered as mediating mechanisms between audience needs and professional pressures. On the other hand, news values are legitimised so often by references to certain characteristics of the large audience that a soberly critical approach is particularly advisable here.

4.4. Declarations of communicators and observations of the everyday routines of media organisations suggest that there are different forms of taking the large audience into account on the different

hierarchical levels. Such declarations might be strongly biased by professional ideologies, and impressions might be distorted by unsophisticated preconceptions stemming from the research paradigms.

4.5. On the basis of empirical results, several authors question mass communication as a real, authentic form of communication (Elliott, Schlesinger, Tracey). "If the broadcasters are unable to find a way of speaking to the needs and interests of young people as the young people themselves perceive these, then there will be no communication. They will either fail to get through, or they will not have an audience at all." (Halloran). Although it might sound absurd, the question is still to be answered: In what sense can we consider mass communication as a form of communication, if professional communicators don't know and don't care about the large audience ?

4.6. While trying to answer such questions or formulate more relevant ones, researchers should probably take a detached view of the problem under consideration. A remarkable proportion of us work in research units of media organisations. Mass media research and audience research particularly produce figures and data which can or even are used to support and reinforce the self-legitimation of media organisations and professional communicators. A critical approach to the relationships between communicators and their audiences might prove to be particularly difficult, because certain conclusive evidences can possibly be uncomfortable even for research organisations. It is not scientific ethics that are referred to here, but institutionalised ways of thinking and doing research which are indeed influenced by institutionalised interests.

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House organs in Yugoslavia

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House organs (newspapers) are one of the main channels by which workers in organisations of associated labour receive information in Yugoslavia. An investigation carried out in 1981 on a representative sample of about 3200 subjects showed that meetings of the workers' council are the only way in which members of a collective receive more information. Material prepared for meetings, notice boards, contacts with management and delegates and the mass media are all visibly lagging behind factory newspapers in terms of their informational value.

It was this importance of factory newspapers which in 1975 prompted our first investigation into their contents. The aim of the analysis was to establish exactly the structure of published articles in order to determine the degree to which these newspapers play a part in the function of self-management. For this purpose a system for categorisation was devised in order to show the thematic structure of an article and then the degree to which cognitive and other elements, important for decision making in self-management, are present. Such elements include, for example, stating the problems, stating possible solutions to the problems (alternatives), presenting the consequences and implications of individual solutions, as well as the orientation in time of the article (towards the future or only towards the past), whether a connection is made with the direct interests of the receiver-worker and, finally, certain formal characteristics such as the length of the article.

The development of such a categorisation system was in fact an attempt to approach the analysis of factory newspaper content in a manner more systematic and theoretically based than has usually been the case in similar investigations carried out in Yugoslavia. The results appear to have justified such efforts. It was shown that the majority of items do not have the fundamental logical elements necessary for active participation in self-managerial decision making. We concluded that the communication is predominantly of a persuasive or convincing type which, with regard to the nature of its message, its thematic structure, agents of the activity described and other characteristics cannot in any way satisfy the informational needs of the worker that have arisen in

self-management in Yugoslav organisations of associated labour.

A new investigation of the same subject, titled "An analysis of factory newspapers contents, 11" was to show whether there had been any changes in this respect over the last few years. The analysis contained significant alterations in methodology concerned with the introduction of new categories and with the better systematization of the total category matrix. Thus we now have eight wider groups of categories: type of article, theme, activity, agents of the activity, orientation in time, cognitive treatment, evaluation, and formal characteristics of the item.

We shall now report some of the basic results of this investigation, first with regard to global results which will be compared, where possible, with the results of the first, 1975, investigation.

The informational structure according to the type of information, i.e. its basic purpose, shows that there have been no significant changes over the last six years with respect to the essential function of factory newsletters. Information which could be of direct use in self-managerial decision making is very rarely present (e.g. preparatory information comprises 1% of the total while control information is totally absent). In contrast, there are many items which are directive or socialising in nature or which have integrative purposes. There is quite a lot of orientational information, but this can be explained by the abundance of facts which must be reported in such newspapers. The basic tenor of writing is therefore directive and integrative and not informative with regard to self-management.

The thematic structure of texts is also unsatisfactory. The human theme dominates, while those of production, business matters, management, organisation in general, external organisations and communities take second place. Thus the number of units dealing with the human theme is double the number devoted to business matters combined (37 percent against 29 percent). With regard to the viewpoint from which the article is written, the most common is that of the organisation (company) followed by the human viewpoint. The business viewpoint is very much behind these, and that of production is even further behind.

This result is in agreement with the essential (directive and integrative) function of factory newspapers which was established by analysing the types of articles.

Regarding the level of activity that is written about, the organisation as a whole (the company) dominates while the basic production units (OOUR - basic organisation of associated labour) are represented fourtimes less frequently. A similar result is obtained by analysing the type of activity under discussion. If a ranking is performed, the company as a whole is in the top place while technical, research, planning and preparatory services are at the bottom. Comparison with the results of the first investigation shows a shift in writing to the disadvantage of production, organs of self-management and socio-political organisations. The agents of the activities described are predominantly bodies or groups within the collective and not individuals. Thus it is possible to establish a certain "institutionalisation" of the agents of activities. With respect to orientation in time there has been a small positive shift, i.e. more articles are oriented towards the future.

Within the group of cognitive categories it can firstly be noted that the informational density of articles is less than it used to be. Comparisons are also rarely given (once in every five cases). In contrast, problems are cited much more frequently than before. Causes or effects are presented in a third of the articles and restrictions in one quarter. The number of articles mentioning alternatives is exactly as it was in the first analysis (just 12 percent) and the situation has hardly changed with regard to stating consequences (6 percent). Thus it is obvious that no advance has occurred as far as the cognitive elements most important for decision making are concerned.

The number of recommendations is also low. An advance can be seen however in the linking of article contents with the direct interests of the receiver (42 percent as compared to the previous 2 percent). We conclude that there has been a certain advance in the cognitive field, but not in the areas where this would be most important.

The production theme: The proportion of members of the collective among authors dealing with the theme of production is greater than average. They are most probably professional managerial personnel. Cognitive treatment is good (comparisons, analyses of causes, statement of consequences are all present) and a strong evaluative component is also visible. It is interesting that there are relatively few pure evaluations, while attitudes are very often present. In our judgement this is due to the position of the authors at work. They are people who daily find themselves in the heat of direct tasks of production and therefore cannot be expected to distance themselves from the material (evaluations only) and to refrain from taking attitudes (attitudes are defined here as reactions of acceptance or rejection of a given solution, direction of action, etc.)

These articles are written from the viewpoint of improving production and the human angle is ignored. It may be noted that other themes are also treated primarily from the respective viewpoint while other viewpoints, with the exception of that of the organisation (company) are explicitly disregarded. In other words the article is written from a one-sided "own" viewpoint even though it is precisely in such newspapers as are considered here that the style should be integrative in the sense of linking a variety of themes and viewpoints. The result of such a manner of writing is a poor recognition by the receiver of the connections between individual factors and components of production and business. It is precisely this complex manner of regarding a subject that is the chief precondition for coping successfully with questions of production and business, and even more so for establishing self-managerial relations within the collective.

A great number of units dealing with production can be classified as being directive articles in nature. However, the editors do not give such articles too emphatic a place in the "spiegel" of the newspaper.

The business theme: The opposite case occurs with articles about business; these are emphasised by the editors much more than any other type of article. The reason for this is probably that the authors of such material are very often workers from the managerial

structure of the organisation. These articles have relatively good cognitive treatment, except with respect to making a connection with the direct interests of the receiver (the opposite to what was found for articles about production). The internal differentiation is fairly weak and professional terminology is used which many find difficult to understand. Otherwise in this field there are frequent articles on decisions that have been reached and it is probably on such occasions that these articles are written.

Articles dealing with management, self-management and the work of socio-political organisations are most frequently directive in nature which is similar to what was observed for articles on production. Here a good cognitive treatment is not found; there are only numerous evaluations, attitudes and recommendations, predominantly from the ideological viewpoint. In terms of their formal characteristics these articles are at the bottom of the rank list: they are often confused (poor scheme), location of the theme is exceptionally faulty and the terminology used is difficult to understand. Another characteristic is probably the most important and this is a poor connection of the subject of the articles with the direct interests of the producers. Self-management and the work of socio-political organisations are written about in an abstract manner which cannot easily stimulate changes in actual behaviour. This approach is difficult to justify when one takes into account the level of activity (organisation of associated labour) in question.

The human theme is quite heterogenous and can be considered as three groups of sub-themes with different characteristics. These are wages, portrayal and standard. The treatment of wages is especially inadequate. Cognitive treatment is weak and only conditions and restrictions are mentioned more frequently. Such articles are often hidden amongst the others insofar as the newspaper's "spiegel" is concerned (i.e. they are not formally emphasised by the editors). One comes to the idea that this is some sort of taboo theme which is to be discussed as little as possible. Under the sub-theme of portrayal mainly integrative

articles are found describing the life and work of individual members of the collective. The informational density is great, many positive evaluations are given and the articles are emphasised in the newspaper "spiegel" and are well illustrated. The sub-theme of standard gives a totally different picture: many problems are stated, causes and effects are analysed, alternatives, recommendations and attitudes (even contradictory ones) are given, and all this is linked to the direct interests of the receiver. It seems that, in contrast to the theme of wages, it is permitted to write in a more developed manner about this theme and to give critical evaluations.

The theme of the organisation is primarily treated in an integrative manner. The cognitive treatment is not particularly good except in the stating of problems. Only positive evaluations are present and attitudes are hardly featured! The articles are short but relatively well illustrated.

An analysis of the results starting from the variable viewpoint gives a similar pattern to that obtained from the thematic analysis. For this reason it is not necessary to report systematically on all the results. It will be sufficient to emphasise some of them. When writing from the production viewpoint, the main theme is production itself. However, in this case the sub-theme of work organisation is distinctly neglected.

An analysis of the articles by type (purpose) of the information divided the units of analysis into six groups, in agreement with the six existing modalities of this category. The first modality concerns orientational information. This may be described as "routine" information dealing primarily with production and business themes. It is in all respects "average", i.e. it does not stand out in any group of characteristics, except in that it exhibits good internal differentiation.

Information about decisions comes as short items of low informational density which do not make a link with the direct interests of the receiver (!) There is an average amount of evaluation, terminology is poor and so is the location of the theme, and there is no dramatization. It is obvious that this is

ordinary informing about the basic elements of decisions. The decisions are not explained and neither do the other characteristics of the information serve to bring it closer to the receiver. The efficacy of such texts must be very low, especially with regard to animating the workers into carrying out the decisions.

Directive or socializing items analyze causes and effects, conditions and restrictions. They state alternatives, possible solutions and consequences and make recommendations. Evaluations (for the most part negative) are present and so are various different attitudes. Evaluation is mainly from the pragmatic aspect. Thematically, most of the articles are concerned with questions of production. This can be viewed as a type of activistic approach to problems in which the author starts from defined aims and extracts problems from the non-realization of these aims. He then adds a treatment of causes and effects, evaluations and attitudes in order, finally, to make concrete recommendations about necessary changes to be made. Such an activistic approach forces the author into a good treatment of his material. This is understandable if it is noted that the author in this case has the role of a leader and teacher and that this role demands a developed communication from him. In the case of other types of article the authors are less motivated and this, unfortunately, leads to much poorer informational results.

Integrative information: These are articles "praising" either individuals or the company. They are emphasised by the editors in the structure of the newspaper. They abound in positive evaluations and good links with the interests of the receiver, but cognitive treatment is only average. Problems are not emphasised but there is a good level of dramatization. From the formal aspect a poor scheme is often noted. It is however positive that the agents of the activity are individual members of the collective.

Service information is linked thematically to recreative, sports and cultural activities. In this respect they are extremely one-

sided since a number of other fields could surely be found which also require such information. Evaluative and cognitive treatment is poor. Surprisingly the informational density is low. Articles are short and of editorial origin.

Recreative information is also relatively short and not emphasised by the editors in the structure of the newspaper. It is oriented towards the past and cognitive and evaluative treatment is poor. However, no more is to be expected of such items.

The next independent variable is level of the activity described. There are six modalities in this category going from the highest level of world economy and events to the lowest concerning individuals. Articles dealing with the highest level, world economy, are characterised by their greater length and by good cognitive and evaluative treatment (excepting the number of critical evaluations). The good links made with the interests of the receiver come as a pleasant surprise. However the number of recommendations is relatively low. Articles dealing with Yugoslav economy show a directive and integrative purpose which results in a distinct orientation towards the future. Evaluative treatment is not particularly good except for the number of evaluations made from an ideological viewpoint. The reason for this may be found in the thematic structure of these articles: a significant proportion is concerned with (self)-management. Cognitive treatment is especially good. A defect in comparison with articles on world economy is that poorer links are made with the direct interests of the receiver. Articles written on the level of one branch of the economy still have good cognitive treatment although the frequency of recommendations and links with the interests of the receiver are only average. Evaluation and formal characteristics are also only on the average level. Terminology, however, is distinctly poorer.

In contrast to these three levels where good cognitive treatment and some cases even good evaluative treatment has been established, the level of the company shows a sudden fall in standards in the case of practically all the characteristics. Informational density is low, there are no comparisons (!), problems are stated only to an average degree, analysis of causes and conditions is poor and

no links are made with the direct interests of the receiver. Evaluations are avoided and when they are given it is only from the pragmatic viewpoint. There is only an average amount of criticism. The same is found in the next level, that of the OOOR or other production units of this type. Cognitive treatment is poor and evaluations are predominantly positive. The presentation of conflicting attitudes is exceptionally rare. Articles are very short and contain no dramatization.

The next level, that of the category of people, does not show any better cognitive treatment. The articles on this level deal mainly with the theme of the person from the viewpoint of management and then from the viewpoint of the person. Evaluations are rare and are usually positive while attitudes are slightly more frequent than in the previous cases. Articles are short and have poor internal differentiation. The final level is that of the individual. Here the articles are longer, well illustrated and show a slightly better cognitive treatment. There are many evaluations and attitudes and even criticism is featured. The basis for evaluation is more often ideological than it is on average.

An overall look at these results shows a sort of curvilinear correlation between the characteristics and the level at which the article is written. Higher levels are given relatively good treatment, that of middle levels is very poor (company, OOOR and category of people), while the level of the individual again shows better treatment. This hidden correlation may be explained by the action of two basic factors: the amount of data available at a given level (including not just elementary data but also information about causes, effects, alternatives, etc.), and the caution with which authors write about individual themes from their own environment. Being over critical when writing about one's own environment, or presenting facts which are "not for public consumption" could have unpleasant consequences for the author. On the other hand, it is precisely at these levels that many key facts are probably not available since they are hidden in fairly inaccessible archives of individual departments or in the heads of managers and experts.

The structure of articles that we have established in our analysis of factory newspaper contents could not have arisen by chance. It is without doubt the fruit of certain wider, and perhaps even hidden, factors which determine that more is written about one theme than another, the degree of informational density with which a theme is covered, the depth of cognitive treatment, the presence or absence of attitudes and evaluations and the tone of the article (praise or criticism). In interpreting the obtained results it appears that most of these differences could be explained by the action of five such factors: the basic position (task) of the factory newspaper, the theme, the position of the reporter, the article's purpose, and the factor of authorship. It is of course to be understood that these five factors cannot cover all the influences that determine the content and manner of writing in factory newspapers. We are however of the opinion that they are amongst the most important and that they do cover most of the observed variance.

What is the influence of these factors ? That of the basic position (task) of the factory newsletter is firstly visible in the distribution of articles according to type. Directive (socialising) and integrative items predominate to the extent that together they make up 48 percent of analysed units ! In contrast, purely orientational articles make up 37 percent of the total, preparatory items for decision making only one percent(!), information about decisions reached 6 percent, service information 2 percent and recreative articles 6 percent. Items of control information are totally lacking ! It is obvious that the main function of factory newsletters is not in the acquisition of information necessary for self management, but something quite different. We have called this function the shaping of the collective. Concretely this consists of directing the workers into the "correct" behaviour and integrating the collective into a harmonious mechanism in which there is a minimum of internal conflict and friction. It is logical that not many critical voices will appear in newspapers with this basic purpose, except when this is allowed by the company management. This is the case for example when the theme is standards.

There we find good cognitive treatment and many critical evaluations. When wages are in question however (a much more delicate subject for the management), such criticism and cognitive treatment does not appear. The reformative ethos of factory reporters, in its critical form, comes to expression only where this is allowed by the company management.

Unfortunately such "permission" is fairly rare. It would, however, be one-sided to judge this basic position of factory newsletters as being exclusively negative. The socialising and integrative functions are essential for every organisation, including the self-managed one. However one cannot accept the exclusiveness of these functions, especially if they affect the main, self-managerial function. Until factory newspapers start to act as "distributors" of information necessary for self-managerial decision making, they cannot be considered to have fulfilled their basic duty.

The other four determining factors, when looked at from a broader viewpoint, act more as correctives to the basic framework determined by the basic position of factory newspapers. This is the case, for example, with the factor of the theme. The factor of the position of the reporter has a similar effect. We have defined this position in another investigation by the syntagma "neutralised reformers". His internal vocation causes the reporter to wish to change the situation in the direction of development of self-managerial relations. However, he is rarely able to do this due to his dependence on managerial structures and partially to his convergence with them. However, when the occasion is present this ethos becomes visibly expressed, primarily in critical writing about phenomena and events in his own organisation. The factor of the purpose of the article is also important in determining the structure of writing within the wider framework of the newspaper's position. This is in accord with the hypotheses of some linguists about the motivation or aim of writing being the fundamental determinant of the structure of the text. An example of this can be seen in the difference between socialising articles and those with a purely informative (orientational) purpose. Directive or socialising articles in

factory newspapers lead to a specific profile of writing about which not much has been known up until now. These articles are inspired by the fact that aims are being slowly or not at all realised. From this basis the author states the problems that have arisen and performs a wide-ranging cognitive treatment which includes numerous facts and analyses of causes.

The evaluatory component is also good and the whole item is completed by the presentation of recommendations about what needs to be done. Orientational items do not get this sort of treatment. Finally, the factor of authorship also affects the profile of the article. The article will have completely different characteristics, especially with respect to formal ones, depending on whether the author is a member of the collective (usually a technician or manager) or a reporter.

Such a broad determination of writing profile in factory newspapers imposes certain definite conclusions with respect to shaping social action. It is obvious that the structure of articles does not depend to any great measure on the goodwill and expertise of the reporters themselves. A much stronger determining factor is found in the environment of the newspaper, i.e. in the company. Therefore, in order to change the basic position of newspapers and all other important characteristics, it is not possible to concentrate exclusively on providing a better and broader education for reporters. Change can only be achieved by changing the attitudes and behaviour of all subjects (especially organised ones) on whom newspaper profile depends. Social action must therefore be aimed in this direction. Only then can significant changes be expected in the structure of factory newspaper contents in the direction of our social targets.

Political Structure and Representational form
in US and Italian television news.

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Speaking of the President:
Political Structure and Representational Form
in US and Italian television news.^{1.}

The metaphor of the mirror has always attracted observers of the media, just as it once attracted theorists of language.^{2.} It has been used in many ways, both simple and sophisticated. Media people themselves often describe the news as a more or less literal reflection of "the course of events", a conception particularly useful for warding off political criticism.^{3.} Others have likened the news image to the images of a fun-house mirror, distorted by such factors as the organisational structure of the media, but still essentially reflective. And many have described the media as mirrors not so much of "reality" as of culture or politics or social structure, reflecting in their standards of judgment the cultural or social framework or the political balance of forces of their society.

The metaphor is true enough in certain ways. But just as language is not really separate from the "world" it "pictures",^{5.} the media do not stand apart from the social processes reflected in the content of the news. Just as language is embedded in the "forms of life" in which we use it, constituted by and helping to constitute those forms, the media are an integral part of political and social life. Their function, as we understand in modern liberal societies, is primarily to provide a running, day-to-day representation of the life of the community. But how they do this, the form of representation they employ, varies greatly, shaped by the structure of those very political and social processes which they attempt in one way or another to "reflect" and by their own role in those processes. And there is every reason to believe that these forms of representation, in their turn, profoundly affect the conduct of politics and the character of social interaction.

This article compares the presentation of TV news in two liberal democracies. There are many reasons why one might expect television news to differ between these two. The two political systems are of course very different. The American system is

presidential, the Italian parliamentary. The US has two political parties, loose in both ideology and organisation; Italy has many parties with much tighter organisation and clear ideological orientations. The US is a world power with military and political interests around the globe; Italy is not.

The media themselves, moreover, are very differently organised in the two countries. American television networks are owned by private corporations and operated for profit. The main nation-wide broadcasting company in Italy, Radiotelevisione Italiana, or RAI, is state-owned, directed by a board elected by parliament. RAI does broadcast advertisements, but a large part of its income is provided by subscription fees paid by television viewers. Of the three channels operated by RAI, two, the ones we will be concerned with here, (TG1 and TG2), have partisan and ideological attachments. One is pro-Catholic, employing managers and journalists close to the Social Democratic party; the other is secular, and close to the parties of the non-communist left. The third is essentially a cultural channel, focusing on regional matters. The news broadcasts of TG1 and TG2, which are 30 and 45 minutes in length respectively, without commercial interruptions, are watched by over half of the Italian population each night. We will show how these differences affect the form of representation, and we will argue that it is in these differing forms of representation that the differing conceptions of politics in the two societies are most profoundly embodied. As Michael Schudson has written:

the power of the media lies not only (and not even primarily) in its power to declare things to be true, but in its power to provide the forms in which the declarations appear. News in a newspaper or on television has a relationship to the real world not only in content but in form; that is, in the way the world is incorporated into unquestioned and unnoticed conventions of narration, and then transfigured, no longer a subject for discussion but a premise for any conversation at all.⁶

Our study is based on an analysis of ten Italian and 15

American news broadcasts -- all the major network evening news coverage from the week of June 7-11, 1982. This is of course a limited amount of material; we intend this analysis as an illustration of a certain approach to the study of news, not as a comprehensive survey of either Italian or American television coverage.⁷

Forms of Representation.

"In comparison to newspaper news," Paul Weaver has written, "television news is far more coherently organised and tightly unified, and this is true of the individual...story as well as of the...news aggregate as a whole...The TV news program tends to present a single unified interpretation of the day's events as a whole..."⁸ The reason for this difference, Weaver argues, is that television news is organised in time rather than in space. The television audience must therefore be carried along by the narrative. It is not free, like the newspaper audience, to browse at will from story to story, and cannot be allowed to stray; its attention must be maintained continuously. A definite theme or story line is thus essential.

And indeed, television news in the US is characterised by this thematic, unified presentation. But the imperative lies in the institution and its social role, not in the technology per se. Italian television shows none of the thematic unity that characterises its American counterpart.

Here are the anchors' introductions to two news broadcasts, one Italian and the other American:

RAI TG1, June 7, Valentini: *"Lebanon, the Falklands -- from our headlines you already know about the disquieting development of the situation in the Middle East and about the growth of military activity in the archipelago contested by England and Argentina. These, surely, have been the subjects most discussed during the Roman talks that Reagan, after the visit to the Pope, has had at the Quirinale with President Pertini and at Palazzo Chigi with Prime Minister Spadolini. The presence of Reagan in Rome constitutes, with the two serious international events going on just now, one of the outstanding events of this day, together with the results,*

that so far we know only partially, of the elections for the city councils of about eighty municipalities, which indicate, up to now, a likely victory of the Socialist Party and of the other secular parties. But let's see what is going on in Lebanon..."

ABC World News Tonight, June 7, Frank Reynolds: "Good evening, if this had been almost any other day it would indeed be big news that the President of the United States is at Windsor Castle, seat of the British monarchy, especially as Mr Reagan came here right after to a visit to the seat of the Papacy and a meeting with Pope John Paul. They talked, the President and the Pope, of peace; and we'll have a full report later. But this has really been another day of war, so we begin the broadcast, tonight, with the latest on the latest war, the one in the Middle East. Up the road in London, at our foreign desk, here is Peter Jennings..."

The Italian broadcast begins with a list of headlines; the day's events are interpreted by the journalist only in the sense that certain ones are listed as especially important. The American broadcast begins with a frame.⁹ It opens with a set of contrasting images -- war on the one hand; peace, authority, tradition, religion on the other -- which places all the day's events within a sort of cosmology, giving them both coherence as part of a single story and meaning as part of a moral order.

To a large extent, the unity of American news broadcasts during this week was achieved by organising them around the central figure of the President. NBC's June 7 report is an excellent example. Tom Brokaw, one of NBC's two "anchors" (the terminology is significant -- they are not just announcers) was travelling with the President in Europe. Anchoring the international portion of the broadcast from No. 10 Downing St., he wrapped up each international segment of the broadcast, and the broadcast as a whole, by bringing it into relation to the President's trip: "and tomorrow, when President Reagan will come here to No.10 Downing Street, that war (in the Falklands) will be the major

subject of attention". The broadcast was thus provided both with a central actor, the President, and a central setting, No.10 Downing St. On subsequent days, international events continued to be tied together by an emphasis on their relation to the President's trip. A level of unity this high is not typical of American news broadcasts; the journalists made a special effort to achieve it during this week, due probably both to the unusual complexity of international news and to the availability, in the President's trip, of a compelling organisational device. But it is something that would never occur to an Italian journalist: an Italian news broadcast never has a central theme, setting or actor.

At the level of the individual news report, the same contrast of representational form can be seen once again. The American report is both "storylike" and interpretive; it is construed to convey a certain understanding of events. The Italian report could be called "referential". It does not offer meaning within itself, but refers the viewer elsewhere: it provides a review, a list, of the interpretations offered by political actors outside of journalism. Here again are two examples:

RAI TG1, June 7, 1982 (following a report giving election returns): *"What do the political forces say about the results we have heard so far, even though they are only partial ? One finds, of course, great satisfaction on the Socialist and secular side with the good returns for these parties. As for the Christian Democrats, they underline the satisfying results they got in an administrative election in which, generally, the CD never achieves as good a position as in political or general elections....But now we have to wait and see what will be the effect of these results on the general political situation because, although it is true that this has been a minor race, it comes just before an important discussion among the parties of the majority.*

Meanwhile, a comment from Craxi, Secretary of the PSI (Socialist).....

From the point of view of the PDSI (Social Democratic) this election confirms that.....

From the Republicans there is a statement of Del Pennino that.....

From the judgment of Zanone, Secretary of the PLI (Liberal) is that.....

From the Communist side, Cossuta observes that.....

Finally there is a statement from Almirante of MSI (Fascist). Almirante says that.....

These are the comments that have been delivered so far."

NBC, June 11, 1982, Roger Mudd: "In an effort to act responsibly and pass a budget, any budget, House Democrats and Republicans joined forces today and passed, 219 to 206, the Republican version of the budget. Lisa Meyers reports.

Lisa Meyers: ...More than 18 billion would be cut from domestic spending, most of it programs for the poor. Majority leader Jim Wright likened it to the practice of medieval bleeders.

Wright: And if the patient does not respond to the first bleeding and indeed gets worse, just bleed him some more.

Meyers: Until the very end, it was questionable whether the House could muster the courage to pass anything.

Representative: I suggest to you the country won't go to hell without a budget.

Meyers: But leaders of both parties argued otherwise....

Minority leader Robert Michaels: If the bipartisan substitute goes down we all go down....

Meyers: Wright pleaded for every member to vote for something.

Wright: To do otherwise, to vote against both, would be a craven cop-out and a retreat from responsibility.

Meyers: This budget must still be reconciled with the one which passed the Senate...Then the House will have to wrestle with a compromise budget, a prospect which excites no one.

The Italian report, like most of RAI's political reporting is divided into a three-part structure; announcement of event, interpretations of the parties, and (though this part may often be omitted) interpretation by the journalist. The order of presentation varies, but most reports on domestic politics contain these three elements. The journalist's interpretation

(in this case marked by the phrase "We must wait to see") is always easily recognisable, and in fact is frequently marked off by a phrase that identifies it as interpretation: "How can we interpret this?", "What does it mean?", or simply, "In other words..."¹⁰.

The NBC report, on the other hand, has no such divided structure, for the journalist's interpretations are either separated from the reporting of the event or from the reporting of the views of party representatives. The structure of the report is an imposed narrative structure, though of course a simple one: it sets the scene and describes the stakes, builds to a moment of crisis ("until the very end, it was questionable whether the House could muster the courage..."), achieves a resolution, and closes by setting the stage for the next "episode". And embedded in the narrative there is a political interpretation: Congress moved so slowly on the budget that there won't be any squabbling that will delay final passage any further. It is the journalist, as narrator, who controls the interpretation of reality. The statements of the political actors do not stand independently, as they do in the Italian report, but are woven by the journalist into her story.

The difference in the role of interpretation and framing is the most important difference in representational form between US and Italian news, but it is by no means the only one. We will summarise here three other important differences. For reasons we will explore in the following section, all of the representational conventions discussed here are closely interrelated.

Use of visual images.

The conventions of Italian TV news are essentially, to return to Weaver's distinction between print and television journalism, print conventions. Not only does Italian television not employ the conventions of unified, thematic presentation that mark American TV news, it also makes little use of the visual characteristics of the TV medium. A good deal of the Italian news report is simply read by the announcer, without any accompanying visual images. And film is used primarily as background to the verbal narrative. It is generally unedited

often of poor visual quality, and often only loosely related to the meaning of the report. The film that accompanied RAI's reports on Reagan's visit with the Pope was filled most of the time with unidentified people milling about on the periphery of the event; reports from Moscow and Washington were narrated over street scenes. Film in Italian television is referential rather than phatic; it shows the scene but most of the time has nothing to say about the event. In American television it is different. Film, and increasingly other visual images (graphics) are central to the semantic structure of the story. They are primarily symbolic: American television uses film not so much to show Windsor Castle or Beirut or the President and the Pope, as to represent tradition, war, diplomacy.¹¹

The role of the common man.

Television news in the United States devotes a good deal of attention to the private citizen. This tendency was somewhat less marked than usual during the week of our study because of the focus on international politics; it is especially in stories on domestic economics and public policy that American journalists are so fond of investigating the impact of events on "common" men and women. Nevertheless, nearly a third, approximately 48 of 150 people who appeared on US television news during this week were "non-official" -- civilians in Lebanon, families of British soldiers in the Falklands, arms control protesters and other civilians in Germany, and so on. Italian television, on the other hand, is almost exclusively concerned with the institutionalised public sphere. Rarely does anyone appear on Italian television news who does not represent an organised participant in the political process.

Relation to audience.

Television journalists in the US rarely speak in the first person. Italian newscasters use first person routinely. US and Italian newscasters, moreover, mean different things when they do use first person. To an American newscaster "we" means the news organisation ("Up the road in London, at our foreign desk")- When an Italian newscaster says "we" he means himself and the audience ("Let's see what is going on in Lebanon"). This usage,

incidentally, is sincere. The Italian announcer has in fact not yet seen the report from Lebanon, and will therefore be just as much informed by it as the audience.

The television journalist in the US, in other words, will not normally "cross the screen" to put himself "on the side" of the audience in relation to events (CBS commentator Bill Moyers is an exception here); while the Italian announcer routinely moves back and forth across that invisible boundary.

Political structure and representational form.

The most obvious explanation for this pattern of differences is that American TV news is commercial and Italian is not. American television sells the attention of a mass public to advertisers; its most fundamental task as a business is to generate and maintain that attention. To accomplish this task American TV news adopts a set of conventions which serve to involve the viewer emotionally in the news. The form it employs is essentially cinematic, combining visual imagery with narrative structure; it is to a large degree motivated by the need to facilitate the process of identification.¹² This imperative lies behind the practice of structuring the news story or even the entire broadcast around a single actor, as well as the focus of American news on the problems of the "common man".

For Italian television, by contrast, the size of the audience is not a pressing concern. RAI does sell time to advertisers, but most of its income is from subscription fees, and in the field of news it faces no serious competition from commercial stations. The two major channels, moreover, do not compete for RAI's advertising revenues, which are allocated by a division of the state company. They do not need, therefore, to adopt narrative conventions designed to promote identification and emotional involvement in the news and thus to maximise audience size. Italian TV news of course faces constraints of its own which account for its particular conventions of reporting. Italian news is political rather than commercial, and political in a certain way. While the primary constituency for American television is the advertiser (and therefore the

consuming public), the constituency for Italian television is the political party system (with the public as political observers or participants). Italian TV news is essentially a utility maintained by the parties to inform the public about their views and activities. Hence the characteristic disjointed non-narrative structure of the Italian news report: announcement of event, statements of the parties, journalist's interpretation.

But the distinction between a commercial and a political news organisation is by itself not an adequate explanation of the differences between the American and Italian systems. We have to look further, to the basic distinctions in the way the public sphere is organised in each society. (We use the concept "public sphere" in the Habermasian sense.¹³) The unified and thematic character of the American news report thus results also from the fact that in the US the institutions of the public sphere are comparatively weak. Newspapers have for the most part abandoned their earlier role as vehicles for the expression of political opinion.¹⁴ The parties are entrepreneurial in the sense of Schumpeter and Downs -- loose coalitions organised for the purpose not of expressing unified ideologies but of competing for political office.¹⁵ And unions and other private organisations function for the most part as "interest groups", pressing particular demands, often behind the scenes, rather than attempting to mobilise public opinion around general ideological perspectives. There is thus a kind of vacuum in the American national political system, an absence of the institutions which in liberal democracies have traditionally performed the function of interpreting political events. That vacuum is filled primarily by two institutions (which exist in a close, though not always comfortable relation to one another): the presidency,¹⁶ and journalism. Journalism is thus the primary institution of the American public sphere: it is the major institution outside of the State itself which performs the function of providing political interpretation and critique.

If the public sphere is, in a sense, "empty" in the US, in Italy it is filled to overflowing, and solidly, even rigidly institutionalised. And this profoundly affects the role of Italian TV journalism. Political interpretation is provided in

Italy by the traditional institutions of the public sphere -- political parties, unions and industrial associations, and parts of the print media, much of which is oriented toward political commentary rather than news coverage in the American sense. There is less need therefore for the television journalist to play an active, meta-interpretive role -- and no reason for the parties, having control over the state broadcasting company, to allow journalism to usurp their function as arbiters of political meaning.

The Italian television journalist is, both in training and in terms of actual power relations, a party functionary. He is trained in the party apparatus, and can be transferred by the party if his work displeases its leadership. American journalism by contrast, has developed into a separate political institution, with a set of functions and an ideology that are more or less its own. American journalists are not only free of direct political control, their political loyalty is primarily to journalism itself rather than to any distinct political tendencies. They see themselves, and are socialised, as members of an autonomous profession of journalism.

In the US, in the absence of other public sphere institutions, as we mentioned, it falls upon journalism to play the active role of giving meaning and structure to the events of public life. Hence the particular American conventions of representation, as contrasted with Italian TV news: the greater tendency to frame and interpret, the use of narrative structures, the more extensive use of visual images and their integration into the semantic structure of the stories.

What does it mean ?

What are the implications of these two forms of journalism ? They are far too numerous for us to review comprehensively here, but we will close by noting several that seem to us particularly important.

Because the conventions of representation in American television make such heavy use of the forms of narrative cinema, certain types of political action and certain types of actors "come across" much better in television news. A narrative requires a hero: the conventions of American journalism therefore place a premium on individual political leadership. This has important implications for the nature of both authority and political debate, though these implications are not simple. Both in the underlying message they convey about the nature of politics and in the conditions they create for effective communication, the narrative conventions of American journalism would seem to favour the centralised political authority of the Presidency. The president is the political figure best able to play the role of hero: he therefore both fits most closely the image of political leadership which Americans learn from the news, and receives the greatest share of news coverage. But the image of the President in American news coverage results as much from the needs of journalism as from the real nature of Presidential power: there is no guarantee that the President can live up to the role in which he is cast. The imperative of creating an image of heroic leadership may be more a liability than an asset to American Presidents in a period of economic decline and

political confusion. As for political debate, the narrative conventions of American journalism make it very difficult for abstract political ideas to be dealt with, and focus attention instead, as has often been observed, on contest: the clash of presidential contenders, the test of wills between the President and Congressional leaders.¹⁷ For Italian news, on the other hand, it is precisely the process of ideological debate which dominates the news, and the actions of political leaders appear as secondary to that debate.

There is much about the form of American journalism that is destructive of the ideal of a politically active public. It is both politically exclusive and monolithic. It is exclusive in the sense that it presents the interpretation of political events as belonging to a sphere which includes the journalists themselves and other political elites, but does not include the audience. And television journalism in the US is monolithic in the sense that offers only a single interpretation of events, an interpretation, moreover, which is presented as though it were embedded in the events themselves and therefore not subject to question.¹⁸ While Italian news offers a series of alternative interpretations (including the journalist's) clearly marked out as interpretations, the interpretation in an American news report is built into the narrative itself, both in its verbal and visual components. While American journalism is an institution endowed with enormous and very visible power as the central "producer" of political meaning, it at the same time has very little solid basis of legitimacy. The institution deals with this problem to a large extent by concealing its power (from itself as well as

the public -- it is largely an unconscious process) by adhering to the professional norms of objectivity. The practices of "objective journalism" in effect require that the meaning of the story be made to appear as though it emerged from the facts themselves, without the journalist's intervention!¹⁹.

Italian news is more open, both in the sense that the audience is treated as participant in the political process, and in the sense that the news always presents a range of alternative interpretations of any event. In another sense though, Italian news is more closed than American: political discussion in Italian news always remains strictly within the bounds of discourse defined by the party system. It speaks a language accessible only to those with a relatively high level of political sophistication: the addressee of Italian news is the party activist. Because of the lack of framing, moreover, events appear in Italian news in an extremely fragmented form.²⁰ The consequence, once again, is that it is accessible only to those viewers with sufficient political sophistication to place it within a context of their own. American news, by contrast, strives to present the news in a way that will make it accessible to the entire public, albeit in a way that assigns to the public a passive role in the construction of meaning.

NOTES.

1. Data for this article are drawn from research funded by a grant from RAI -- Radiotelevisione Italiana, Verifica Programmi Transnessi. We would like to thank Herbert Kitschelt and Michael Schudson for their comments on drafts of this article, and Helene Keyssar for guidance through the literature on cinema.
2. We are thinking primarily of the early Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1974.)
3. Edward Jay Epstein, News From Nowhere, (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp.13-15.
4. Gaye Tuchman discusses this version of the mirror theory in Making News, (New York: Free Press, 1978), pp.182-183.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, (New York: Macmillan, 1958).
6. Michael Schudson, "The Politics of Narrative Form: The Emergence of News Conventions in Print and Television," Daedalus, 111:4 (Fall, 1982), p.98.
7. Remarkably little has been written comparing the media of different countries. One "review of the literature" -- not terribly out of date because not much has been done since it was written, can be found in Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "Towards a Comparative Framework for Political Communication Research," in Steven H. Chaffee, ed., Political Communication: Issues and Strategies for Research, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1975).
8. On the centrality of the President in US news see Herbert Gans,

Deciding What's News, (New York: Pantheon, 1979) p.9.

9. On the concept of "frame" see Tuchman, op.cit., and Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

10. Paolo Mancini, "Prescriptive Doing in Television News Reporting," paper presented at the International Sociological Association, Mexico City, 1982.

11. On the symbolic function of television images see William Gibson, "Network News: Elements of a Theory," Social Text, Fall, 1980.

12. On the importance of identification see Sharon Sperry, "Television News as Narrative," in Richard P. Adler, Understanding Television: Essays on Television as a Social and Cultural Force, (New York: Praeger, 1981).

13. Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit, (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1962); Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopaedia Article (1964)," New German Critique, 1:3 (Fall, 1974). Habermas' book is not available in English. We will cite the French edition, L'Espace Publique, (Paris: Payot, 1978).

14. The newspaper -- in case this is confusing -- continues to be central to the American public sphere, but the form of its activity changes from that of expressing explicit political opinion to that of providing authoritative information and interpretation. Most of what we say here about the political role of American TV news (and a good deal of what we say about forms of representation) applies to newspapers as well as television.

15. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, (New York: Harper and Row, 1950); Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).
16. On the US President as arbiter of political meaning see Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power, (New York: Wiley, 1976).
17. See, for example, Thomas Patterson and Robert McClure, The Unseeing Eye, (New York: Putnam, 1976).
18. This argument needs to be qualified a bit. In form, an American television report is organised as though it had a unified message. But that formal unity is often an illusion: it is often possible to identify conflicting or at least disjointed frames, coexisting within the same news story. During the week of our study, for example, many reports were divided in their framing of Reagan's trip accepting its symbolism at one moment at face-value, yet presenting it the next moment as image-making. One CBS report thus began with film of the ceremony that accompanied the President's visit to London, coupled with the statement that "President Reagan today became a part of British history," and ended with a discussion of the image the President hoped to convey on American television by associating himself with the symbolism of British monarchy. These conflicting frames were not integrated into any coherent larger framework; at the same time, however, they were not acknowledged as different interpretations, and the story proceeded from one to the other as though no shift in point of view had taken place.
19. Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," American Journal of Sociology, 77 (1972).

20. Franco Rositi, Informazione e complessita sociale, (Bari: De Donato, 1978). Italian political life can be seen as both static and fragmented: the same ideological conflicts persist year in and year out. And Italian TV news reflects both these characteristics, the first in the lack of unifying frames, the second in its tendency, discussed below, to remain rigidly within the established bounds of debate. American TV news is certainly fragmented in its own way, particularly if one looks at it over time. But each story and broadcast is presented in such a way that it seems to the audience to have some unity of meaning. The media of both societies can thus be seen as "reflecting" different forms of a common malaise, an inability to achieve a working consensus on basic social perspectives through political debate. In Italy this leads to a fragmentation of perspectives, in the US to the imposition of an illusory unity.

JOURNALISM AND REALITY

An essay on the crisis of Norwegian (Scandinavian ?) journalism.

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As indicated in the title, it is a fairly good question whether the crisis of Norwegian journalism, to be described in this paper, is a phenomenon which includes in its rather dramatic contradictions (and, above all, in its ethic tension) all the four Scandinavian nations.

At the core of the crisis we find the ideology-dissolving strength of the rapidly growing neo-commercial tabloid journalism, which is growing in at least two different ways:

- 1) in neo-commercial journalism as such, and
- 2) in spreading its influence (or certain elements of it) to Norwegian journalism in general.

In the following discussion there are two basic concepts, the first of them expressed in the term "neo-commercial journalism". The term stresses the predominance of commercial motivation for developing the alternative journalism which the neo-commercial tabloid journalism stands for.

In the conception of the author of this paper it is a rather elaborated and in some scientific sense a kind of pseudo-journalism.

The other basic concept is the need for the formulation of an ideology of the press compiling essential conceptions extracted from the common debate on matters concerning journalism and the public, i.e. the concept that there exists no prevailing ideology with a content of ideas according to the state of, and the problems of society today. The ideology needed would be that of "the importance of the essentiality of the reality picture". As to the further premises for this discussion, see below.

Using the term "crisis" for the state of Norwegian journalism today is rather uncommon, despite the fact that what is occurring is nothing less than a revolution in the motivation for practicing journalism in newspapers. This includes the basic principle of neo-commercial journalism: the editorial staff should be the tool of the one-eyed profit-seeking ownership of the newspaper. If there happens to be a second eye, this will be concerned with maintaining the state of the establishment, or with ways of extending the possibilities of private profit making. At least the first of these aims is probably the general long-range effect of neo-commercial journalism as a whole.

The question of ideas, and conditions of journalism in a society can hardly be separated from that of ideology (theory). Both questions encompass the role and purpose of newspaper journalism, which are influenced by ideology and vice versa. It is therefore important to determine what ideology - if any - is the prevailing one to be discussed in relation to economic and other material and cultural conditions.

In Norway today journalism is changing more rapidly and thoroughly than ever before. Probably none of the various elements of this change are unfamiliar in the practice of journalism in the Western world. However, in a rather small country like Norway, which has a rather minor cultural unity easy to comprehend and to survey, the process of change is clearer to see. We can observe its infection of, and other effects on Norwegian journalism in general. We can discover its premises, implications and coherences. This is of extraordinary importance for our understanding of journalism as a scientific discipline and quite necessary for discovering possibilities to describe the influences that challenge the integrity of journalists and

journalism.

If one could speak of a New Journalism in Norway (and Scandinavia ?) it could hardly be anything else than the neo-commercial journalism, to which the products of journalism are like perfumed soap or other daily bought consumer goods. Commercialised journalism has arrived later in Scandinavia and Norway than in other parts of western Europe. In Norway right now it is like a dynamic innovation on its way to a colourful flowering. We are present at the creation. We can watch how the neo-commercial journalism, which is solidly rooted in the two nationwide tabloid newspapers (that are no.1 and no.3 in circulation) is developing in a plurality of ways, e.g. in subject matter and language, and how it is spreading its conventions to Norwegian journalism in general - to newspapers, radio and television.

Our lack of knowledge of neo-commercial journalism is almost total. We have no systematic knowledge of its premises, techniques, its genres and psycho-linguistic tricks, or of its psychological effects on the mind. Neither have the neo-commercial journalists who themselves are the, if not unconscious, at least not very conscious tools of their masters (the owners of the newspapers) and their conventions, such knowledge.

What seems to be evident is the removing of the purpose and role of journalism in favour of banal entertaining, towards a fictitious personifying of reality, and towards a mix-up of the public and the private sphere. As a public media phenomenon this must be of a special sociological interest.

Implicated in these trends is the increasing tendency of establishing rather cheap and stirring emotional effects (e.g. in connection with sex and crime) of a kind which calls for the word-play of "the medium is the message".

Altogether neo-commercial journalism has already caused radical changes in the choice of the newspapers' subject matter and in the evaluation of news. It is bringing about a revolutionary qualitative change of content with decisive consequences for the picture of reality formed by the newspaper (journalists, journalism).

In other words, we are facing the threat of a severe impoverishment of our most important source for forming our concepts about our world and reality, and for qualifying us for being responsible participants in a democratic society.

So important is the role of newspaper journalism. And this role can't be left over to the mechanisms of the trade market.

Neo-commercial journalism is attacking traditional Norwegian journalism as a cultural value in two ways: journalism is becoming an increasingly inferior product (as often stated by public opinion rather than by journalists); and, secondly, because the two neo-commercial tabloid papers together enjoy a circulation in excess of 400 000, this reduces to a remarkable degree the manifold possibilities for discussion about alternative conceptions of reality, the newspapers being regarded as the most important arena for such discussion. This is why newspapers have traditionally been given such priority in Norwegian politics, and why a system of economic support was founded to keep up what is called "a political differentiated choice of newspapers" all over the country.

This idea did probably not emerge from the liberal theory of the press. It is more in the spirit of its successor - the theory of social responsibility.

The growth of neo-commercial journalism actualises the question of the conditions of ideology in today's journalism. We have a journalistic reality, but do we have any present journalistic utopia ?

A Norwegian social anthropologist studied the change-over process of the newspaper "Dagbladet" (Oslo 1983) when it shifted from regular size to tabloid, a process which involved simultaneously steering the paper's journalism in a more neo-commercial direction. Two of his observations were quite remarkable:

- 1) there seemed to be a "de-ideologisation" of the journalists taking place
- 2) the journalists' way of practicing the neo-commercial journalism (both in lay-out and language) was labelled "media

aesthetics" , and the journalists were accordingly termed "media aestheticians".

We shall later return to the question of "de-ideologisation".

Let us first face the question of ideology in today's (Norwegian, Scandinavian) journalism.

What is left of the theory of social responsibility ? Is there a de-ideologisation going on ? If so, does this imply a state of non-ideology ? Or does it refer to the rise of an alternative or revised ideology ?

These questions have - all four of them - remarkable actuality for today's journalism. Being discussed, they contribute to enlighten the situation.

Without detracting from the theory of social responsibility we may

- a) revise our concept of what is "social responsibility" and
- b) formulate new ideological purposes and principles for journalism, provoked by new economic and cultural developments which have created new ideas and conditions for journalism and society, implying the exceeding of any earlier prevailing ideology, so as to meet new ends.

Such new ends to be acknowledged as important for the purpose and role of journalism might be expressed in the words "the ideology of the essentiality of the reality picture" (of the newspaper, i.e. which the newspaper (journalists, journalism) brings to the public).

A formulation, as such, of a revised and superinducted ideology of social responsibility can be explained in different ways, e.g. as the extraction of ideology-relevant arguments from the current debate on today's society.

The concept of the "essentiality of the reality picture" is first of all pointing at two relations concerning the Norwegian debate on journalism and society. At the same time as the rise of neo-commercial journalism, many critical voices have persistently held forth the necessity of the essentiality of the picture of reality as crucial, while at the same time neo-commercial pseudo-journalism is rejected as a kind of mental pollution.

Secondly, the term "essentiality" implies the recognition of the concept - finally - that the quest of "objectivity" is impossible and naive. The old quest for objectivity is in a way contradicted by the Norwegian public arrangement to maintain "a political differentiated choice of newspapers", an ideal asserting the more sober view that objectivity is a discussion between alternative conceptions of reality. This concept also affords a renewal of the old discussion of objectivity, bringing in the front position impartiality and reliability, besides essentially being one of the basic premises of journalism.

Essentiality is inherent when Lars Furhoff specifies the role of the journalist in Pressens Årbog 1983-2 (Kbhvn.1984):

/ The journalists shall inform their fellow citizens of what is going on in society.

/ Journalists shall reflect the background to what is happening in such a way that their fellow citizens are able to see things in a meaningful context.

/ The journalists shall keep under surveillance all kinds of holders of power and on behalf of their fellow citizens point out needs, inconsequences, misuse of power and attempts to manipulate information (e.g. the neo-commercial journalism?).

/The journalists shall comment on news and events so as to stimulate the public debate and encourage people to take a stand.

About this, Furhoff states, there is unanimity in the Scandinavian countries.

There is much coherence between these sentences of Furhoff and important parts of the acting programme of the Norwegian Association of Journalists (Norsk Journalistlag). The acting programme is establishing a front against neo-commercial journalism when it states: Journalists are in the first instance responsible to the public (the people as audience) which has the right to be informed of what is going on in our society as well as in the world.

Further, the programme gives a solid context to the strongly normative sentence cited above, such as --

- a) the firm address to the responsibility of the journalist
- b) the implicit stressing of the essentiality of the reality picture.

Both Furhoff and the acting programme of the NJ are rooted in well-founded public and political (as to values) regards, also concerning the "responsibility as to the essentiality of the reality picture".

Once in a while one finds in works on theory of the press or ethics of journalism, a normative-ethic fobiae so consequent as to reveal an altogether ethic impotence. What should prevent us from prescribing for a cultural institution like the press (i.e. journalism) at least a little of the idealism which we prescribe for similar institutions like the schools and universities ? For all three of them there is more emphasis on co-operation in culture and underlying unity than on the separate sources on which these cultures are based and their respective influences on the minds of the people concerned.

Two qualities in the development of the media, technological and historic, stress the special importance of newspaper journalism.

1) the development from the newspaper to radio to television comprises a universe steadily growing in space and manifold.

2) at the same time the quantitatively expanding reporting is intensifying in speed and superficiality.

Only the newspaper -- newspaper journalism -- still gives the opportunity for deep reading which also comprises current and historical aspects of existence.

Both aspects of the development of the media call for essentiality and the possibility for deep reading, the latter with a falling possibility from newspaper to TV, while the relevance of essentiality is equally important for all three.

We may say that there are two main trends in Norwegian journalism today, with a dramatic contradiction between them. What is dramatically contradictory is that instead of promoting

essentiality, neo-commercial journalism tends towards increasing unimportance and insubstantiality.

De-ideologisation and media aesthetics are in other words rather foggy terms, which may be said to be quite jovial euphemisms for

1) cancelling the responsibilities and obligations of journalism towards society, and

2) professional manipulating of the public by means of psychological tricks and certain techniques of presenting the un-essential "reality picture" of the paper.

((The concept of the term "professional" (see above) seems more and more to be tending towards an interpretation in the media aesthetic sense of the word, however seriously understood)).

What then should "de-ideologisation" really mean? Generally speaking it should be translated into a definition of a trend towards a state of non-ideology. Would that be the factual situation for neo-commercial journalism? I do not think so. The question of ideology cannot be dependant of the question of whether an ideology is formalised in some kind of a programme or not.

So, the ideology of non-commercial journalism seems to be a kind of caricature of the old liberal theory of the press (the caricature mainly due to anachronism), with all possible weight put on unlimited freedom of print and on a kind of social Darwinism, not so much for individuals as for the newspaper as an enterprise of consciousness industry. A flattering term fit for this ideology might be "the what people wants ideology", a term which - without the affix of "ideology" is already commonly used by neo-commercial journalists who are convinced that the expression speaks truth. Again we are facing an euphemism, more apt to give the impression of audience-loving eagerness to meet people's wishes than of mere opportunism.

How does one handle the agenda setting function of journalism as to news, comments, actuality reportage etc. according to the

idea of the essentiality of the reality picture ? It must be done by some advanced elaborating of the traditional art of evaluating news.

In neo-commercial journalism the agenda setting function is handed over to a brand new editorial sub-office, rapidly growing into one of the mightiest departments of the newspaper -- the editorial marketing department, which is currently conducting polls and other kinds of investigations to find out "what people want". The marketing department is the dynamic source of innovative inspiration for the media aestheticians of the neo-commercial newspaper.

The "what people want" ideology is the basic premise for investors of profitseeking capital to go into the newspaper business. In Norway such investors are now moving into local papers too, and we are observing the first signs of neo-commercial journalism at the local level, both in a more "visualised" presentation and in the form of a more "pragmatic" sense of "what people want".

Up until these days a non-profit attitude of mind has held a solid position in the Norwegian newspaper business, which has been a consciousness industry in quite another sense of the term than according to the neo-commercial journalism. Traditionally it has been regarded as important to participate in the current discussion between alternative conceptions of reality. But neo-commercial journalism might soon succeed in cancelling the non-profit tradition, as it is now marching noisily into the Norwegian newspaper business, with the words PROFIT AT ANY PRICE written on its standard.

The present conditions of journalism, with its alarming tokens of crisis and danger of promoting disinformation rather than information, may still be a situation pregnant with coming innovations as to the ways of taking care of our most vital needs of consciousness and knowledge of life and reality. A state of antithesis with so much mental gunpowder in it, might cause turbulent times for the journalistic trade, and may be damaging to the traditional technical and economic basis of newspaper production. We may well face a future where material equipment

for making newspapers is a public matter like schools and universities whose integrity and autonomy is undisputed.

In the Scandinavian countries it is not by the public authorities that the integrity of newspaper journalism might be threatened, even if the trade is suffering from a one-eyed phobia with its everlasting fear of public censorship or other unappetising influences. It is rather strange how the trade simultaneously closes its eyes firmly to other influences from external interests,

-- a real pluralistic and multiplex apparatus already in full media aesthetic activity.

The task of the press (journalism) as the fourth public power is, in the later years, extended to watching over the power holders of all kinds (cf Furhoff above), especially those representing rich economic resources (though except for media investors having established direct or remote control of neo-commercial newspapers). The best way of defending the public against misuse of economic or other power might be to defend the press against the same.

In this perspective neo-commercial journalism is both a widespread and unexplored phenomenon, and it is equally important to explore what it does as it is to find out what it does not do. We must know in detail its ratio between reality and fiction. and we must - for the sake of our own welfare - learn to not use, but to interpret its language.

A second part of this essay -- not translated -- deals with a phenomenon that has never been described: journalism as a scientific subject. It is not even defined as such. The views of the essay derive from a project to be called "Newspaper journalism in Norway in the eighties". The crucial question is that of motivation, as discussed above, which can be investigated on the basis of different kinds of qualitative content analysis. At the same time such analysis may contribute to the definition of journalism as a cross-disciplinary subject, rooted as it is in above all social science and the humanities. In the project special interests are tied to the question of the existence of basic connections between journalism and the theory of publicity,

especially that of the organisation of public areas. A fundamental idea of the project is the concept that the combined approach (founded in social science and the humanities) is necessary both for the understanding of journalism and for the totality and interdependence of the different problems and views, comprehended in the project, on journalism as a profession and as a cultural phenomenon.

Beyond Information:
TV News as a Cultural Discourse.

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The Enigma of TV News

The everyday phrases we use to refer to TV news and what it does reflect our cultural assumptions and ways of thinking about the programs. For example, we say that TV news is a report about the "events of the day", which we can "see with our own eyes"; TV news has "immediacy" about it and is more "concrete" than, say, newspapers. Often, we say that TV news is "easier to follow" than the print media. And most fundamentally, the function of TV news is to "inform" the viewers, to convey factual information about the events portrayed.

These common notions are of course to some extent grounded in the reality of TV news as experienced by the viewers and capture some of the essentials of the programming. Such views also express the professional perspective on TV news- broadcast journalism's own self-definitions. Yet at the same time, there is growing evidence from research on both the audience and the programs (from several countries) that there are other, important dimensions to TV news which this traditional understanding does not grasp.

The most obvious area of inadequacy of this common sense view concerns TV news as a dispenser of information. Study after study confirms that in terms of "recall", "retention" and "comprehension", audiences are not getting very informed by TV news, at least not in a standard rational/cognitive sense of being informed.¹ Most viewers, even with prompting, can only recall a small minority of the news items from a typical newscast. Even if the definitions and premises of such research are a bit narrow in terms of human cognitive processes, the findings are at least symptomatic. Other audience studies have demonstrated how attention tends to decline markedly in the second and third ten-minute periods of a 30-minute broadcast.

Perhaps still more telling is the research done in Sweden on the message structure of TV news broadcasts.² These findings conclude that the relationships between the elements of a newsstory are often unclear, the logic of cause-effect sequence is many times background and implications of an event are frequently absent, and the visual and textual components are poorly coordinated in many instances. In short, this work suggests that the levels of recall and so on are low because TV news itself is oftentimes difficult to comprehend; its composition sets up obstacles to understanding.

But there are other curious aspects. If one can accept that the form of the programs are not conducive to comprehension, one may still cling to the idea that the contents themselves are "concrete" and that TV news conveys an immediacy to the reporting of current events. Research³ that my colleagues and I in Sweden have been carrying out suggest that often this is not the case. (And based on my knowledge of TV news programs elsewhere, I am inclined to say that Sweden is not unique in this regard.) Thus one finds that many stories are indeed rather abstract: they may narrate an event which is not based on something that has happened but rather on what someone (usually a high-ranking political figure) says may happen if certain conditions are or are not fulfilled. Or the story may concern the response taken by one bureaucracy towards the actions of another, but on both sides the "action" consists of a regulatory measure to be placed on the agenda as a proposal. Or the "action", typically, is simply the fact that someone says something in the media.

In short, "action" is often conceptually abstract and events are at times elusive: the neat dichotomy between events which occur "out there" in the world and are then reported by TV news tends to break down upon analysis. As observers have on occasion noted, many events exist only in or because of the media.

The idea that events are transmitted via TV news in a mode of "immediacy" also turns out to be a slight caricature. In fact, many stories manifest what I call 'chains of distanciation' between event and viewer. For example, the anchorperson will introduce and summarize a story about something someone has said regarding his future political career. The anchorperson then turns us over to a reporter in the field, who may elaborate. Then we may see a recording of an interview with the person in question, where he expresses his thoughts regarding his possible plans for the future.

Similarly, we often encounter the notion that TV news gives us a "window" on the world. This is understandable, given the visual aspect of the programming. But it is a mistake to think that what we see on the screen is the essence of the news stories being reported- that we are seeing visual recordings of events as such. This does happen at times, of course, and in those moments, TV news is at its best. But for the most part the visuals add little information: they define locale or or merely present us with some very standardized and cliché

images of building exteriors, corridors, etc. where the event is transpiring. Or, alternatively, the visuals can be rich in imagery and fascinate us with details, eg. the inside of a factory, film from military conflict zones, and thus constitute a narration essentially independent of the textual narration. But this returns us to the problems of comprehension we referred to above. In most cases, the visuals simply serve to confirm the text, that is, provide a rhetorical element which persuades us that what the text says is indeed true, that it actually happened as reported.

But perhaps the most interesting enigma here is that despite that most viewers obtain little information from the broadcasts, and despite that the stories are frequently difficult to comprehend and do not report on events which have "occurred" in the obvious sense of the term, and despite that the viewer is often distanced from these abstract events by several mediating chains and that the famous visuals only occasionally really correspond well with the text, people not only watch TV news a great deal, but trust it more than any other news medium. Late in 1983 a study came out from the Preparatory Board for Psychological Defense that Swedes trust TV news more than print and radio news. Moreover, the trust was highest among both Social Democrats and Conservative party members.

This is puzzling, at least on the surface. That TV news has become the first or major source of news for most citizens is at least understandable in terms of convenience or its entertainment value.

That it evokes more confidence that the other news media should give rise to some questions. But then the fact that popular notions (as well as professional definitions) as to what TV news actually does, how it operates and what it accomplishes in terms of information appears to be so at odds with the picture which emerges from more systematic analysis is indeed curious.

Clearly then, there is more to TV news than meets the eye, so to speak: the prevailing perceptual lenses which we use to think about TV news are too narrowly focused on the question of news as information. Most journalism research on TV news is, in my view, too wedded to rationalistic premises as to what takes place between the program and the audiences.

TV News as a Cultural Form: Discourse

In keeping with these popular and professional conceptions, a great deal of research on TV news assumes a basic "transfer of information" model. In this framework, the TV news program is treated as a dispenser of facts and messages: these can be studied for their objectivity, comprehensibility, newsworthiness, etc. The audiences in turn, can be analyzed as to their understanding of these messages, how much they learn from them, which of them they can remember, and so on.

If TV news is not a very successful conveyor of information, and if the "facts" are often lost on the audience, this does not suggest that people are stupid, or that they are left with nothing after the broadcasts. While the information model is certainly of some use in studying TV news, its overly rationalistic angle of vision perhaps leaves central elements of the TV news process lingering in the shadows. To see only the strictly journalistic dimension to TV news is to ignore other features which may be of much greater significance in terms of the experience of everyday viewing. The impact of TV news may well lie far beyond the rationalistic issue of information, but research approaches committed to this orientation and its sets of assumptions about viewing, will miss the possibility of exploring new ground.

It seems that a productive starting point for probing into the other domains of the TV news phenomenon must begin by suspending the focus on factual information. To "suspend" here merely means that we allow it recede into the background of our perceptual field, we need not deny its existence. Thus, if we "crystallize out" information, what is the residue which is left? What is it that emerges in the foreground?

If the information is that which varies from day to day, that which is factually "new", then to suspend this component allows the program "vessel" which "carries" this information to come to the fore. Now, this distinction is not hard and fast, and I would avoid rigid dichotomies such as "content and form". Yet, I believe we can speak of TV news as a cultural form, an identifiable genre of cultural product and practice in our society. If the informational dimension is that which is non-repeatable, there remain many elements which are recurrent, stable and recognizable from one day to the next. This domain establishes and defines TV news as a cultural form distinct from all others.

But what I wish to emphasize here is that this cultural form is more than just a carrier; it too communicates, it too says things to the viewer; it is not merely an inanimate vehicle.

Given that TV news is comprised of words and images, that these follow rather standardized conventions, and that this cultural form addresses members of society on a daily basis, we can call TV news a particular form of discourse⁴. Now, I don't wish to load the concept of discourse with many theoretic implications and sociological meaning, but I do suggest the following: a discourse is a particular and consistent mode of language and symbol use, which provides meaning and defines contexts, helping us to make sense of our everyday life experiences. Discourses structure boundaries between different domains of social life; their production and consumption are shaped by specific social conditions and relations. Also, discourses reflect different angles of vision on reality; the boundaries between discourses, though not always marked, can become quite visible when breached. Thus, the discourses of the home, medicine, law, work place, fashion, state administration, esthetic analysis, and intimate relations tend to create separate "realities". To use the discourse of one in the established context of another, eg. to express intimate affection with legal language, can lead to bizarre reality "warps".

The upshot of this perspective for our purposes is that the concept of discourse highlights the ultimate inseparability of language and social reality. Discourses not only serve to structure our relationship to reality, they also contribute to shaping our view of reality. One need not capitulate to pure relativism or idealism to remark that there is consequently no privileged discourse which can make claim to present social reality to us in a manner untouched by the social processes which give rise to the discourse. This is no less true for social science or TV news. But while this view cautions against the Faustian dream of a genuine instrumental language with which to "mirror" reality, it also accords an opportunity of a more encouraging sort. To treat TV news as a discourse helps us go beyond the perspective of news as a report of reality and helps us better to examine it as a reality unto itself. That is, we can begin to treat TV news not just as a report about the world, but as the manifestation of a symbolic world which is directly experienced by viewers in their everyday lives. For if the viewers apparently do not absorb much information, yet are still engrossed by the programs, by suspending the informational aspect of TV news we can better begin to explore the dimensions which are perhaps

more pertinent in terms of the viewers' experiences of the broadcasts.

By way of analogy, we can think of the boundaries between different discourses as somewhat parallel to the distinctions between different literary genres. The repertoire of symbols used, the codes by which they are organized, and the other conventions of production, result in structurally and thematically coherent and distinct genres which we readily recognize. Writers can do different things with different genres- certain effects can be achieved with the classic detective novel that cannot be attained with popular romantic magazine stories. Each has its limits and possibilities. So it is with the somewhat more ambitious concept of discourse. While there may be difficulty at times in drawing the line between different discourses, , eg to what extent do local or regional TV news broadcasts constitute different different discourses from the national transmissions- there is sufficient clarity to separate TV news from other culturally prevalent discourses which offer accounts of social reality, such as everyday conversation, social science, documentary film, and even, I would argue, printed news.

Each of these refract social reality in their own way and also situate the viewer/reader/listener in different potential relationships to the reality they present. Each mobilizes and reinforces collective cultural perceptions in its own way, and make available certain ways of seeing, while excluding others. Thus, the fundamental "bias" of TV news has little to do with party labels or particular policy options (though such issues can certainly be of relevance in other research contexts) but rather in the manner in which it presents the world (or a world) to us and the relationship it fosters between us and this world. Once we look beyond the question of information transferral, we can begin to interrogate TV news as to how it operates as an historically specific discourse. If one has any doubts about how our ways of seeing the world are historically contextual, one need only compare TV news today with newsreel movies from the 1950's.

The Narrative World: Thematic Content

While discourses are in historical flux, on a day to day basis they appear stable. If we make the simple distinction in TV news discourse between the world that the programs present, that is, the narrative world of the stories, and the various

relationships which are fostered between viewer, narrative world, and the news programs themselves, we find that both components do not vary much over short time periods. There may be interesting differences between TV news discourses in different countries, but there does not seem to be sufficient comparative research done to say too much on this with any degree of certainty. In any case, in this section I will take up some aspects of the narrative world as it pertains to discourse analysis, and in the next section I will discuss the relationships fostered with the viewers.

A variety of research studies, including my own, indicate that the narrative world of TV news is a rather stable and repetitive universe of thematic content, by which I mean recurring and recognizable elements which comprise a consistent totality. The audiovisual discourse of TV news is composed essentially of a sequence of stories, and it was with this concept that we began our own empirical work. As we immersed ourselves in the material, we found that while the boundaries between news stories as separate production items with narrative accounts were generally quite clear (i.e. program conventions readily signal that a new story is about to begin) we discovered that often any one news story could contain two or several sub-stories within it. In other words, there might be several intertwined narrative threads. Thus, we developed the concept of "dramatic unit" as our basic research unit: a dramatic unit is a distinct, identifiable story line, with a complete narrative cycle. It contains all the essential elements of drama: actor, action, recipient, field of relevance (scene/setting) and sometimes also agency or means. A dramatic unit fulfills the minimum requirements for accomplishing "storyness". Dramatic units proved to be a helpful device for mapping out the thematic content of the broadcasts. There are many versions of drama analysis, from structuralist to rhetorical, though most divergence tends to be in the terminology. Our purposes did not require any elaborate theoretical model of drama; we in fact sought to keep our coding logic simple. The approach we took, unlike some complicated structuralist methodologies, was not intended to seek out "hidden meanings" in the discourse, but rather to map out the apparent and manifest elements of the thematic content. Our orientation was toward what the viewer sees, and tried to capture the essence of the response to the question "what happened?" that most viewers would give, if provided with the opportunity of

repeated viewings, if required.

We found that most news stories revealed their dramatic units without too much uncertainty. This makes sense, since the producers and journalists themselves are trying to tell the viewers "what happened", and we found that the reports, in their internal organization and structure, reflected rather clear demarcations between dramatic units. The dramatistic view of reality is central to the journalistic organization of collective perception.

Others before us have explored the narrative world of TV news,⁵ and the thematic contents we delineated do not differ markedly from that found by other researchers. This is in part due to our approach aiming at a rather high level of generality: our code schedule sought only to make a basic classification of actors, actions and so on as the first step of an analysis which had a number of other purposes. Also, our data base was only for one week, so a large quantitative study on this point would not have been very meaningful. But we found that even one week's material in fact demonstrated the "world of TV news" in a manner more clear than we had anticipated: the actors are overwhelmingly well-known high political figures and state bureaucrats people in the labor union establishment, experts, corporations, and lower-level spokespeople for government. Often the actors in dramatic units are non-personified, institutional or impersonal, i.e. an administrative agency. As noted earlier, action is often abstract or consists just of making a statement. The fields of relevance were dominated by economic issues, inter- and intra-party affairs, state policies and administrative problems.

All these are no doubt familiar to the regular viewer, and it is not my intention here to present a tally of our findings. But I do wish to emphasize that various degrees of specificity are possible to the thematic content. Our rendering of the narrative world was based on our particular priorities and consequent code schedule; others could strive for more detail and even try to map the changes and evolution of the narrative world's thematic content. For example, one may well hypothesize that the military is a more prominent feature in Swedish TV news in the light of the sightings of the unidentified submarines off the coast. Thematic content, as a concept, allows for a research orientation closer to the viewers's own epistemological disposition, and is more helpful in charting the collective cognitive maps of our culture than a strict orientation to factual information.

The TV News/Viewer Relationships

If the first component of discourse defines the recognizable narrative world, the second concerns the relationships within and between the communication. It is at this point we can truly begin to profit from the distanciation implied in our treatment of TV news as discourse.

To probe the various relations involved, it will benefit us to make use of R. Jakobson's familiar model of the functions of communication.⁶ His use of the term "function" here may be a little misleading; simply, he posits that meaning in communication is dependent on the relational balance between the various pairs of elements that comprise a communication. Thus, emitter, message, referent, medium, code and receiver can all be paired with each other in varying combinations (giving rise to the different functions). The resulting balance between these interfaces give us strong clues as to how particular forms of communication function to transmit meaning.

Jakobson begins with the referential function, which consists of the relationship between the message and its referent. This is the basis of information- the communication of accurate and verifiable facts about something, using symbols and codes to stand for (in relation to) external objects. Here we find the fundamental purpose of journalism - to inform. The analysis of TV news however, suggests that this referential function, the transfer of information, is comparatively subordinate to a number of the other functions present in TV news communication.

The referential function is deflated in relation to the emotive, injunctive, poetic, and phatic functions.

The emotive function has to do with the relationship between the message and the emitter- between TV news as an actor or Subject with a social identity, and the narrative world it presents to us. As I have written elsewhere, TV news portrays itself, it presents a "self-image" vis a vis the viewer, which emphasizes its status

of professionalism and objectivity, its apparent access to the entire world and especially the powerful, its image of virtually unlimited knowledge, its command of technology, its sociability and its discreet admonishments to pay attention, all are part of its social identity. This ensemble is built up by symbols, codes and rhetorical strategies, but the net outcome is that it defines an overwhelming trustworthiness in relation to what it says. Its self-image succeeds in contributing a powerful credibility to

the narrative world which it depicts. Whether this is always well deserved or not is another question, but research can focus on how this is accomplished. For instance, our work has dwelt a good deal on how the particular use of the camera in the filmed or videotaped segments of the visuals utilize the esthetics of "naturalism" (or realism) to render the camera invisible. This esthetic, derived from other (often fictional programming) gives the impression of "being there", thereby camouflaging the fact that news is a social production and further legitimizing the factuality of the story and the notion of objectivity itself.

The injunctive function is based on the relationship between the message and the receiver. For the viewer, the narrative world of TV news invites certain dispositional stances while discouraging others. If we treat TV news discourse as a form of socio-political acculturation, we can inquire into the rhetorical implications of the programs. What stance, what forms of praxis, what expectations, etc. are congruent with the various domains of the thematic content? If TV news has become the prime link between citizens and the public sphere, what role does it foster for citizens? What are the features of the curriculum it teaches? While the answers to such questions may be and often are pessimistic, (eg., powerlessness, dependence, inefficacy, etc.) they must be weighed against a broader, more anthropologically informed view which can situate the relationship between viewers and the world of TV news in a cultural context. Thus the dimensions of security, belonging, admiration, etc. which emphasize integration and identification with the prevailing social order should not be neglected here.

The poetic function refers to the relationship between the message and itself. In other words, the referent becomes the message: the message is no longer an instrument of communication but is now the object of communication. For TV news, this has to do with the phenomenon whereby the world to which TV news refers is gradually supplanted by the world which it presents. The stylization of the discourse, the routinised use of symbols and their assumed significances, the familiar devices, readily allow the viewer to become engaged in and experience the TV "image world" with a minimum of involvement or knowledge about the external world to which it refers. The origins of this are to be found in sociological factors (privatization, the growing gap between personal and political experience, etc.) as well as in the attributes of the discourse itself. However, the point is not to locate blame,

but rather to better illuminate how TV news operates in the communication of meaning to viewers; obviously this requires that discourse cannot be analyzed in absence of its social contexts.

The phatic function is closely related to the poetic. In the phatic, the relationship is with the communication itself, (while the poetic is with the message itself). The phatic dimension focuses on the maintenance of the communication- to keep it going and confirm the contact. It comes to the fore particularly in circumstances where the content of communication is secondary to the fact that it is taking place. In this sense, it links emitter and receiver, perhaps to something larger than both of them. Ritual, ceremony, routine occasions, and religious or secular "rites" all emphasize the phatic dimension. Thus, the analysis of TV news discourse has revealed features which function essentially to hold the viewer's attention or to convey a sense of belonging or participation. The aura of being informed by fast-breaking news and getting reports "as they happen" and so on, can be traced to specific elements in the discourse; these also have a social significance far beyond the formal issue of obtaining information about the day's events.

The Dynamics of Meaning

The line of development in the relational balance I have been sketching above corresponds to my earlier comments about the non-informational aspects of TV news viewing. The shift from the referential function to the others that followed witnesses a move from rational to more arational cognitive involvements with the news.

At this point it will be helpful to reposition this discussion of TV news to the more general level of televisual communication, and the processes by which audiences construct meaning from the viewing experience.

Research on TV news must be sensitive to the distinctive features of the television medium; it is understandable, though in the long run unproductive, if journalism research on TV news at times approaches the broadcasts with a mind set shaped by the print media, thereby ignoring qualities unique to television. It may well be that watching TV news has more in common, at the experiential level, with the viewing of other TV programs

programs than it with, say, reading a newspaper. Though still inconclusive, there is some suggestive neuro-physiological "brain studies" on TV viewing.⁷ The view that emerges here is that TV watching activates the slower "alpha" brain waves (reading, for example, tends to mobilize the faster "beta" waves) inducing a state of consciousness which is¹⁸ passive, and also depresses cognitive mental processing. At the same time, other, more affective activities can be prompted from the brain by the TV programs.

This line of inquiry intersects with the more general work on what has been called the "left and right brain hemispheres". The lines of demarcation are not as clear-cut as originally thought, so the left-right distinction should rather be seen as metaphoric. Yet it is valid as a designation for differentiated sets of cerebral functions. Thus, TV viewing, as an activity, is largely a "right brain" phenomenon, while reading is "left brain". One should be careful not to see this in too rigid a way, but I find it useful to keep in mind this "cerebral bias" of the TV medium, as this may tell us a great deal about television's limits and possibilities, and steer us away from placing unreasonable expectations on the news programs.

From a completely different intellectual tradition, we have studies on the cultural mechanisms which, in my view, closely follow the logic from the brain research. The basic thesis here is that particular media, and indeed whole cultures and historical epochs, may lean more to one pole than another,⁸ (while asserting that there are no simple dichotomies). For the sake of simplicity, let us retain the left/right polarity (some authors refer to "literate" and "oral" cultural traditions) and just list some the adjectives used to describe the pertinent bi-polar dimensions:

<u>"Left brain" bias</u>	<u>"Right brain" bias</u>
informational	experiential
diachronic	synchronic
linear	mosaic, holistic
sequential	episodic
logical	intuitive
analytical	evocative
cognitive	affective
explanatory	analogous

These polarities may remind the reader vaguely of what McLuhan called "sense ratios", and there is indeed some intellectual lineage to be traced to him from some of those writing in this vein. Most of McLuhan's writings were far too unsystematic to be of much use in the development of theory, but his impres-

sionistic approach seems to have prompted some more rigorous work which acknowledges his contribution posthumously.

Rather than treat these developments as proof of anything in a final, indisputable sense, we would be better served to see it as mounting evidence and growing intellectual capacity aimed at broadening our understanding of TV news. As should be evident by now, many important nuances of the TV news discourse lie beyond the strictly informational. Even if the contours of the newer perspectives are not yet fully in focus, once we have begun to expand the terrain of our inquiries and utilize an enhanced conceptual apparatus, we can not turn back- we can only proceed in a forward direction.

Thus, in the construction of meaning from TV news, it seems that the left/right brain model helps us to conceptualize different types of cognitive activity which correspond to the various dimensions of the discourse. I would offer a three-part typology as an initial scaffolding for theory and research:

1. the traditional research approach emphasizing the rational cognitive processing of information corresponds to an ideal "left brain" involvement with TV news. Though perhaps the least typical of the three, it cannot be ignored;
2. The force-field between the left/right polarities would give rise to cognitive activity characterized by associational understanding and affective response. If formal linguistic rationality and visual information dominate in the first mode of activity, here we find something else. The viewer's pre-existing thesaurus of knowledge, with its zones of relevances and schemes of classification, is mobilized. Semantic and visual cues activate networks of association and affective dispositions, reinforcing and/or modifying them. In particular, the recognition of familiar motifs and symbols of the thematic content tends to drive out the more formal mode of comprehension. Easy recognition and affective response can thus provide an illusion of deeper comprehension;
3. The "pure" right brain mode of involvement would correspond to engagement beyond conscious awareness. This plunges us into the realm of the unconscious, where we are in a mental state shut off from the external world. Experience and reality are internal, with the logic and coordinates of orientation congruent with this domain.

Further, the unconscious is not only active, it is creative. Wish fulfillment, or Desire, originates there, and much of the

input from the world of external experience is stored there and later "processed". To introduce the unconscious in this discussion is to call attention to the presense of myth and archetype, as well as the latent, as opposed to the merely manifest dimensions of TV news discourse.⁹ Research ignores the arational spheres of TV news to its detriment.

These three modes of cognitive activity are co-present during viewing as a result of the nature of the audio-visual discourse of TV news. To make this short journey into the epistemology of viewing is not to say that we can only examine TV news in relation to viewer experience. Rather, by probing these modes of cognitive activity, I wish to call attention to the multi-dimensional qualities inherent within the discourse. To dwell only on the manifest side is to fall victim to the literalist fallacy, namely, that what the discourse says is identical with what it does. Research too often deals only with external reality, ignoring psychic reality.

Seeing TV News

TV news discourse is a form of collective representation in our culture, and touches us at a variety of levels, as I have indicated. It thus resists simple decoding via a rational linguistic model; by triggering associational understanding, affective dispositions and unconscious activity, it functions often as an intermediary between the visible world and the imaginary. We cannot expect to find, in the course of our research, unequivocal meanings; this cultural form is too protean in its character.

But while TV news may escape from neat analytic boxes in which we may try to place it, this phenomenon is by no means beyond research. On the contrary, studies of the discourse, framed by specific questions aimed at elucidating its concrete features, can tell us a great deal. For the discourse, with its narrative world and implied relationships with the viewer, makes available and excludes, specific ways of seeing social reality. While the ultimate "effects" of any particular elements may have to be sought by researching audiences, charting the forms of consciousness and structures of feeling TV news offers (in general and in relation to specific issues) will tell us a great deal about the culture of our media environment. For forms of consciousness obviously have congruence with social structure, the constellations of power, and the potential politics of a society.

Whether one's research concern lies with the critique of ideology or with issues of cultural integration and the social order,

or whether one is concerned with pragmatic issues such as the improvement of the news programs, the perspective I've presented here should be of some relevance. To see TV news in this light, to go beyond the informational dimension of the programs, raises many methodological and conceptual problems- how deal with affective, synchronic and arational qualities with tools and approaches originating from the opposite pole of cerebral activity, for instance. While I can't go into such a discussion here, it seems to me that we need a great deal of qualitative research on TV news. We may for now have to confess to methodological modesty, but we should not use that limitation in guiding our perception of what TV news is all about and how it works. Let us instead try to be honest and ambitious about the kinds of knowledge we seek about this phenomenon- and struggle to develop the appropriate methodologies.¹⁰

Notes

1. For a recent review of this literature, see W.G. Woodall, et al, "From boob tube to black box: television news comprehension from an information processing perspective" J of Broadcasting, Summer 1983. Also, J. Stauffer et al, "The attention factor in recalling network television news", J of Communication, winter 1983.
2. The basic text here is O. Findahl and B. Höijer, Vad säger oss nyhetsprogrammen? Swedish Broadcasting, Research Dept., 1978.
3. "Sweden's Dominant Influence News Media: Their Role in Defining and Framing Reality". Funded by the Humanities-Social Science Research Council, Stockholm.
4. A helpful discussion on discourse and the news media is found in J. Hartley, Understanding News, 1982.
5. See for example, R. Smith, "The mythic elements in television news" J of Communication, winter 1979, and G. Knight and T. Dean, "Myth and the structure of news" J of Communication, spring, 1982.
6. This is concisely presented in P. Guiraud, Semiology, 1975.
7. H. Krugman, "Brain wave measures of media involvement" J of Advertising Research, Feb., 1971.
8. W. Ong, Interfaces of the Word, 1977, D. Lowe, History of Bourgeois Perception, 1982, Fiske and Hartley, Reading Television, 1982, B. Nevitt, The Communication Ecology, 1983.
9. The essay by P. Wood, "Television as Dream" is to be recommended. In Newcomb, ed., Television: the Critical View, 1982.
10. The work of Paul Ricoeur can be of help in thinking about methodology, especially on the relationship between "explanation" and "understanding". See his collection Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, ed. and trans. by J. Thompson, 1982.

"The personal problem" or
neo-moralism, alcohol and journalism.

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In the background to my paper there are some development traits in the Western countries which have been discussed in Scandinavia, Great Britain etc. We can describe them in different ways: e.g. as a new criterion for classifying people and to broaden the gap between 'good' (class A) and 'bad' (class B) employees.

One of the factors which have led to this new situation is mass unemployment making it possible to choose employees from a larger number of candidates than ten to fifteen years ago. On the other hand, the value of efficiency has constantly increased. From this point of view, people belonging to class B - in other words, unskilled or semi-skilled people, older people, people who are not one hundred percent healthy or sober or not very effective for some other reason - have increasing difficulties on the labour market.

Mass unemployment has not, in many cases, given rise to empathy for those people belonging to class B. On the contrary, attitudes towards people living on social welfare have become less tolerant, less liberal, less human. Quite often their difficulties are interpreted as consequences of their personal defects: laziness, lack of energy, alcohol problems and so on. I suppose the ideological and political loading of this attitude is quite clear. Journalism and the mass media in general may both reflect this changed climate of opinion and even promote it. The tendency in question is denoted here by the term neo-moralism.

In some countries there are studies on these problems. In several articles in the book Alcohol, Society and the State 2, the Social History of Control Policy in Seven Countries (Toronto 1981) the

rise of neo-moralism is at least mentioned. In Norway Vibeke Lohne, Thomas Mathiesen and Anne-Lise Middelthon have edited a book titled Om menneskesyn, behandling - og stoffmisbruk (On the conception of man, treatment - and abuse of narcotics. Oslo/Gjøvik 1982, available in Norwegian only.) In Great Britain Peter Golding and Sue Middleton have pointed out the role of journalism and the mass media in general (the title of their book is Images of Welfare, Press and Public Attitudes to Poverty Worcester 1982.

In my own country I see all these phenomena, and some experts in the field of social welfare policy have expressed serious concern. What has especially captured my interest are attitudes towards alcohol problems in journalism. Without a systematic study, I have recognised in them neo-moralism, stereotyped ways of thinking and a level of knowledge which I believe is lower than ten to fifteen years ago.

On the other hand, we in Finland have a long tradition of an ambivalent attitude towards alcohol, and this tradition is in quite complicated ways reflected in journalism too. As for individual abusers of alcohol - who today are described in journalism perhaps more openly than ever before - there is something very scandalous about them, but also something humorous if not heroic. Part of the title of my research project (which is available only in Finnish) and this paper consists of the formulation "the personal problem", (coined by one of the best-known Finnish journalists) which today is a fairly well-known solgan in my country.

THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 1: FOUR SINGLE CASES

I have made seven analytical case studies of content. Four of them concern the coverage of single persons with alcohol problems - real or less real - in Finnish journalism and three of certain groups with the same problems.

The single persons were a) a member of Parliament who gave a speech in a night session in a state of intoxication, b) a very popular actor who was dismissed from the National Theatre in Helsinki because of his chronic alcohol problem, c) a professor who was obliged to resign his chair at the University of Helsinki for the same reason, and d) a chronic alcoholic without any job or even occupation who was the central figure of a TV programme, the idea of which was to introduce a victim of alcohol to the Finnish people.

The journalistic treatment of the first three men followed a certain model: (1) dramatic discovery of a drinker, (2) enriching the picture of the drinker and (3) a pseudo reconciliation for him.

The first phase just consisted of slandering the man in question by name, especially in the two evening papers in Helsinki - even in big headlines - and in the case of the MP also in TV news. Some light weeklies followed this same line. The morning papers were much more restrictive or did not mention these single cases at all.

The second phase, enriching the picture of the drinker, meant at least three things. The follow-up of the story sold papers for a longer period of time, and it also kept the main figure in the spotlight for a longer time.

But it brought several different details of the man and his case into the public eye as well, thus making the stories softer. Just one example: in the first case it was mentioned several times that the politician did not belong to the leading drinkers of Parliament at all - and at the same time some papers listed the heavy drinkers in Parliament and described characteristic traits of their lifestyle. The first three men were also interviewed several times.

The third phase, or pseudo-reconciliation for the defamed man gave, according to my interpretation, a kind of "happy ending" to the story. The MP again received normal publicity for his political speeches, the actor began to make films and a TV play and the papers wrote about this. The professor married again and received positive publicity. But it is also possible to interpret the follow-up to the cases (let's say a year after the scandal) as implicitly maintaining the public stigma given to the man by journalism. These men are still, today, in a way public drinkers whose public reputation is to a large extent based on the newspaper scandal of 1983 or 1984.

The TV programme about a chronic alcoholic was a special case. It was not vulgar social pornography (which I suppose is a Swedish term); on the contrary, it was well done human TV journalism without any open moralism. Some of our leading TV critics even praised it. My critical attitude towards that programme is due to the more or less open interpretation model of alcoholism given in the programme; the man in question was from his childhood a predestined alcoholic without any genuine alternatives. Massive, total helplessness was the main message

of the story - according to my way of seeing it. Other possible interpretations were ignored.

THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 11: THREE GROUP CASES

I analysed and interpreted the journalistic coverage of three groups: 1) employees in different occupations with alcohol problems, 2) drunken drivers, and 3) people in need of a rooming house because of their alcohol problem or some other reason.

Certain common traits also united the coverage of these cases:

a) implying that all the members of a large group are more or less similar, b) insisting on hard measures against them, and c) neglecting to examine the problems of the members of those groups and question the reasonableness of the measures against them.

The first case is based on a research report which did not contain any neo-moralism; instead it was critical of the climate of opinion in Finland today. But journalistically the report had a life of its own quite independent of the original content. The so-called guidance to treatment of alcohol problems (we have such an agreement accepted by both the employers and the labour unions) was often re-interpreted in journalism: the results are not good enough and we need harder measures. This recommendation was normally an abstract one, and the content of those harder measures was never concretised. In some cases Norway and its system - the circle of fellow workers reacting to the alcohol problems of one of them - was presented as a model for Finland.

The second case was also based on a research report, on the opinions of Finns about suitable punishments for drunken drivers. The great majority thought that in outrageous cases confiscating

the car would be a commendable punishment. In this public opinion poll the meaning of the term outrageous was not defined. It is probable that many of the respondents identified it with drunken drivers killing a pedestrian or something like that. In Finnish legislation, however, the content of that concept is simply 1.5 per mille alcohol in the blood; thus the concept is not at all tied to causing an accident. In journalism the results of the poll were only reflected, not discussed - with some few exceptions. Especially in headlines, the results were simplified: Finnish people think the car of a drunken driver should be confiscated. (In Finland it is impossible to find any criminologist or criminal politician who would support mechanistic and unjust punishments like that, even if drunken drivers are a problem.

The third and last case was different. In the beginning several of the newspapers, in the spirit of genuine neo-moralism, were explicitly or implicitly against building new rooming houses. But gradually the tune changed and - maybe because of the contacts between some leading officials of the city of Helsinki and journalists - the plans for new rooming houses were understood and even more or less supported.

THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE 111: THE VIEWPOINTS OF THE FOREMEN OF CLINICS FOR ALCOHOL ABUSERS.

In order to test my interpretations by consulting some practical experts I sent a letter to a certain group of foremen of clinics for alcohol abusers. Most answered me and supported rather than negated my hypotheses.

This group of practical experts was in most cases worried about the new moralism in journalism. People with alcohol problems are more hesitant to come to the clinics than before; in other words the threshold has been raised and this fact may make the alcohol problems even worse than they are. The demands made on the clinics today are often unrealistic. An illustrative example of this phenomenon is supplied by an employer who sent one of his workers to a clinic on Friday and called the foreman of the clinic on Monday morning. "You remember the client I sent you on Friday. He came to work today but had been drinking at the weekend - so you have failed." It was quite usual to combine that kind of case and the neo-moralism in journalism and even see a certain causal relation between them (the problems in the clinics are partly due to journalism).

The foremen of the clinics were also critical towards the demands for economic and other kinds of efficiency at the municipal level. This state of affairs makes it even more difficult than before to get economic support for services for clients, most of whom belong to class B mentioned above. The connection between this mood and journalism were discussed in several answers. The prestige of the clinics and the work there maybe goes down and the work motivation gets worse - here we have a vicious circle. Journalism doesn't directly make the circle go on but does so indirectly, according to some interpretations, let's say by recommending, without criticism, new types of authoritatian and anti-intellectual, in some cases even commercial, "alternative forms of treatment of alcohol problems" to compete with the clinics.

Understanding of the very nature of alcohol problems was the most frequently mentioned means against neo-moralism. To promote such understanding is not possible without the cooperation of the mass media. So, journalism and mass media in general, in spite of the situation today, also have positive possibilities.

What we need is a different kind of journalism

In my research report I illustrate today's state of affairs by an old metaphor: the top of the iceberg. Alcohol problems (in Finland and in general) are very complicated, varying and deep. They are an integral part of our culture and society. Journalism informs us about these problems but quite insufficiently: we see the top of the iceberg only and maybe even this in a false or misleading light.

One of my ideas is that writing stories about individuals with alcohol problems and identifying them by name is not good practice. It is one of the manifestations of the degeneration of the press described and analysed last year in our colloquium in Dubrovnik by Jon Dørsjøl from Oslo, Norway. We can speak about increased anti-intellectualism in journalism (even if this phenomenon in Finland hitherto concerns more the two evening papers and some weeklies and to a more restricted extent other types of media). Speculatively I can ask if the general understanding of alcohol problems has not regressed. If so, journalism has to bear part of the blame.

Instead of defaming individuals I suggest different types of journalistic solutions. The media could discuss people with alcohol problems anonymously - which they sometimes do. My point here is not the right to privacy, as seriously as it should be taken, but

avoiding commercial sensationalism which divides people in a false and misleading way: certain men and women are alcoholics while the others are not; we ourselves are not. Anonymous cases make it possible to cover problems without commercial sensationalism. One of the possible techniques is to operate not only with anonymous but also with constructed cases; so you have more journalistic freedom to present what is essential to your audience. A third solution is fictional stories about alcohol problems, including radio and TV plays. We have these now, but not sufficiently.

There must be journalistic possibilities to cover different collective phenomena and group problems in new ways, too. For myself the results are just one example of superficial, misleading, manipulative journalism opposite to an ideal called objectivity. The idea of objectivity for me is correspondence between the content of journalism and reality itself. This correspondence is possible in a relative sense only but even so, the reality of alcohol problems in Finland could be covered less superficially, less misleadingly, less manipulatively than is the journalistic practice today. This is my individual, personal but not subjective interpretation (subjective is something based on the subject only and not on information from outside the subject's consciousness; in practice subjective = arbitrary).

In the Finnish debate some of my colleagues have recommended a new type of journalism about alcohol problems: the idea is that people with such problems should come to the public media themselves and inform the audience and society about their situation - personally and/or collectively. This idea is I think a good one

which is not in conflict with my theoretical conception.

If all went well, such publicity for alcohol problems would mean that essential aspects of reality would be covered more richly, more honestly, more genuinely and more deeply than today. In other words : it would raise the grade of objectivity in journalism.

METHODOLOGY

Activating the audience:
The program leader's persona
in TV-information programs.

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The ideal of a genuine public sphere, much like the concept of a democratic society itself, remains a vision which can help define the directions and goals of policies (as well as struggles) within the mass media. Thus, journalism, as a central institution of the public sphere, has the tasks of providing citizens with the news and information relevant for orientation and participation in the socio-political world. Moreover, journalism must also help generate horizontal communication between various groups in society and stimulate discussion so that political will can be formed and articulated. It is at this point where considerations beyond the formal informational requirements come into play. In other words, questions about how well journalism fosters reflexive response among its audiences requires us to face issues not only of comprehension, but also of the manner of presentation, styles of rhetoric, modes of journalistic discourse, and the experiential and even subliminal dimensions of journalistic texts.

This becomes perhaps even more pertinent when we turn to television, which in many countries is increasingly becoming the predominant journalistic medium for large numbers of citizens. As we have discussed elsewhere,¹ television is quite poor in successfully transmitting cognitive information, while at the same time it is very strong in precisely the affective, experiential dimensions.

As a journalistic medium, television has a number of established genres and formats. Aside from the news programs, which are the most common, there are also, for example, current affairs programs with discussions and interviews, and magazine-type programs with longer, more detailed segments on contemporary issues. Common to virtually all journalistic programming on television is what we call the program leader (PL). This person, or persons- sometimes there are more than one- serves as the central pivot of the program. On the news broadcasts s/he is usually called the "anchorperson"; in other formats we have "moderators", "program hosts", etc.

The PL is the focal figure who not only begins and ends the program, but also introduces each new segment or news story and steers the interviewing which takes place in the studio. As viewers, we are always returned to the PL for the start of each new item on the program. The PL is thus obviously the crucial "human factor" in defining much of the experiential impact of TV journalism.

In developing the study which we present in the following pages, we made use of current pedagogical theory² which we found relevant for some of these issues of the public sphere in general and the

PL in particular.

Television and activational pedagogy

From the literature on pedagogical theory which has emerged over the past two decades or so, as well from our own experiences as teachers, we identify two basic tendencies or styles in pedagogical approach. These two tendencies may not necessarily be consciously chosen by a teacher, or for our purposes here, a PL, but the consequences can be specified just the same. We call them, for the sake of simplicity, traditional and activational pedagogy.

In making this distinction, we are not arguing that one style is by definition always and invariably better than the other. Rather we find the distinction useful because one or the other may be more appropriate for the specific TV-journalistic task at hand and for the circumstances in which the pedagogy takes place. In the traditional style, when it is successful, the involvement and attention of the audience is largely cognitive and analytic. Their own role in the pedagogic situation is, at least on the surface, largely docile. In keeping with this, the audience's relationship to the PL is also quite subordinate: the acquisition of information and the entire learning process is typified by the audience's dependence on the PL. The information conveyed is- in the best of cases- stored for possible later use. While TV is generally weak in such information transferral, as we said, it is our conviction that modest degrees of success (at least higher than generally now achieved) can be attained by more paying more attention to comprehension and other basic pedagogic considerations.

Activational pedagogy is, obviously enough, the bipolar opposite. In successful activational pedagogy, the situation is marked by the audience's attention being actively engaged. That is to say, the program not only conveys some degree of information, but more significantly, it stimulates the audience's own thinking during the broadcast and, if the situation permits, their own discussions afterwards. Audience members experience their own thoughts, reactions, and views as valid and reasonable, and see themselves as subjects, actors in the social world. This permits a reflexive involvement, i.e. it paves the way for audience members' consideration of their own praxis. The involvement here is not just cognitive, but affective and intuitive; the pedagogy is evocative in its impact.

Moreover, the relationship of the audience to the PL has a clear element of independence. The PL has the competence and author-

ity to command the audience's attention, but the dynamic between them is one of catalysis rather than dependence.

The distinction between traditional and activational is of course somewhat of an idealization; reality is seldom so clearcut and most situations will have elements of both. It is a question of degree. But as we suggested, the tendency can be of significance for the pedagogical goals in mind. For example, to convey abstract background information which must be absorbed and assimilated as a step in acquiring fundamental knowledge about a new situation which has arisen, the traditional style is best suited. Actively engaging the audience, evoking their immediate responses, can well detract from this purpose. Alternatively, when genuinely trying to encourage audiences to relate some new material to the practicalities of their own lives, the activational style is likely to be more successful. While it is possible that different segments of a single program may deliberately emphasize one or the other, we take the view that the transition from one to the other within the same program can be difficult and thus should be minimized.

Let us be clear about the question of the PL's role toward the audience: we are talking about the relationship experienced by the audience. The signals, cues and symbols which define the PL's overall gestalt may not be directly perceived by the audience, in the sense of cognitive awareness. Normally, they are experienced on a subliminal level.

Research design and the 4 program versions

We began with the idea of a short- ca. 14 minutes- program, typical of the "magazine" style often seen on Swedish television.

Those produced by the Educational Broadcasting Division (EBD) of Swedish TV are often made available on video cassettes so that interested individuals and institutions may rent them at low cost. This was a decided practical advantage for our project, since the "natural" viewing site of such programs is thus not limited to the home. We could therefore gather viewers in some institutional setting which would not necessarily appear as an artificial situation.

For the research study, we developed three different versions of the program, where the PL was to have a distinct "persona"- that is, his overall gestalt and relationship to the audience would vary in the different versions. This we achieved by modifying details in the script, his attitude toward the audience, his clothing and coiffure, the style of language and the intonation he used, his body behavior, and the studio's scenography and lighting. However, the formal content was identical in all the versions and the camera-work was fully conventional.

With the help of TV producers at the Educational Broadcasting Division of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation and a number of actors, we generated 4 versions of this program; it had the theme of "children's television viewing". The persona of the program leader in each of the 4 versions was:

- I. cold, elitist, professional
- II. friendly, patriarchal, professional
- III. engaged, divided, unprofessional
- IV. younger, friendly, professional (a variant of II)

The 4 versions were shown at a municipal center for day care instruction. Each version was shown on a separate occasion to a separate audience of municipal day care professionals who had previously taken courses at the center. Their participation was motivated by a request from Educational Broadcasting to draw upon their views and experiences in the important issue of children's TV watching. The invitation indicated it was to be a "brain-storming" session and that a short program would be shown in conjunction with the discussions.

After each viewing, the participants were randomly placed in groups of ca. four, each with a discussion leader who was well-known as an instructor at the center. The discussions, 12 in number, lasted about 30 minutes each. They were recorded and transcribed as a text; the tapes and text constituted the data for our analysis.

Group discussions: tracing the pedagogic impact

Rather than ask the participants what they thought of the program they watched- which can be done with a variety of research methods- we decided upon a more indirect approach. We hoped that by having people address themselves to the subject matter of the program and talk about these themes in relation to their own experiences, we could obtain data about the extent and success of the activational pedagogy embodied in each PL's persona. That is, the way people respond to the programs would tell us something about the "effects" of the different versions.

Our methodology for the analysis of spoken interaction is one which is still in the process of emerging in the human sciences. Drawing from several disciplines, it does not have the firm self-confidence that some of the more standard procedures display. As a recent survey on the methods for analyzing spoken interaction puts it, "There is then, a lack of recognized and accepted procedures for collecting, presenting and analyzing conversational data".³ However, as this project was undertaken as a pilot probe, we decided to let our research questions suggest an appropriate methodology

rather than visa-versa. Part of our project, then, was to develop our methods.

In our orientation, we treat the spoken interaction of conversation and discussion as collective enterprises which manifest unique, non-repeatable histories. Our interest is in the discussion as a group product, an objective and observable accomplishment. We are not concerned with the psychology of the speakers, nor is the social psychology of the situation per se our research topic. Our basic premise is that variations in the programs will be mirrored in the discussions. Each discussion represents a collective encounter with a program, and the tapes and transcripts are the historical texts of that encounter. Also, we anticipate that the small size of the groups would foster easy participation for the group members.

The GL's were instructed to facilitate a discussion on the theme of children's TV viewing and to invite the participants to talk about this theme in relation to their own lives. We advised the GL's to keep the discussions going by introducing topics or asking questions where this might be helpful, but otherwise to minimize their role. They were not to dominate the discussions in any way, nor to try to keep the discussions alive in any manner which seemed unnatural. They were to aim for about 30 minutes of conversation, adjusting this to where the discussion seemed to be going at the time.

We were very much aware that such an undertaking was filled with potential problems. Much depended on how well the GL's played their roles; in our view, the three GL's in our data base were eminently successful. Still, the very nature of the research design raised problems of both reliability and validity: variations in the group discussions could be caused by a number of factors, not least the social-psychological dynamics at work when four people who do not know each other well sit down to talk.

While our findings may not be conclusive, there are a number of points which argue in support of our study. First, we take the position that "pure", "spontaneous" conversation or discussion does not really exist and that the distinction natural/unnatural is somewhat misleading. All speech is influenced by the situation in which it occurs; all spoken utterances can be treated as performances in concrete contexts.

Secondly, the context here, or situation, was highly consistent for all the groups, given their common vocational and educational background, the randomized group placement, and the fine, stable

performances of the GL's.

Thirdly, our preliminary analyses of the tapes matched very closely the GL's own accounts of what took place during the discussions.

Fourthly, as the discussions were both audio-taped and transcribed, we had two forms of data for our analysis, which could complement each other. The transcript lends itself more readily to systematic study, but with the tape we could check the accuracy of the transcription as well as capture certain dimensions and qualities which are not directly visible in the text, eg. laughter, voice inflection, tone, tempo, and intensity.

For those who have never seen an accurate transcription of a discussion or conversation, the first encounter may prove startling. One is used to seeing edited written texts, which have structure and coherence. A transcription, with all the false starts, dangling sentences, stammers, illogical statements, etc., looks chaotic and incoherent. But, paradoxically, it usually sounds coherent and structured to the speakers. To analyze such a text, we must not impose the standards of written language that we normally use. Rather, we must respect the authenticity of the collective product and try to flush out the sense of order which lurks beneath its apparently chaotic surface and which was experienced by the speakers.

The analysis of spoken interaction

In this section we present our approach to the analysis of the transcript and the conceptual vocabulary which goes with it.

Based on this, we then operationalize, in a qualitative way, how successful activational pedagogy from the program could manifest itself in the discussions.

For such analyses, there are no magical recipes, only different strategies which can yield better or worse interpretations.⁴ As in all social research, the findings are in part dependent upon the manner in which one interrogates the data.

We had a total of 12 discussions, averaging about 17 pages of text each. With that much material, we were forced to capture potential variations in the discussions with rather broad strokes.

At the same time we needed a level of analysis which could at least identify major elements and dynamics at work.

The fundamental unit of analysis is the spoken passage of a speaker. Talk proceeds by turn-taking of spoken passages; when

there are more than two speakers, as in our case, the order of turn-taking cannot be predetermined. A passage can be relatively long- a few were even over 10 lines of text- or extremely short: one word, or short phrase. Most passages consisted of 2-3 lines of text. In principle, each passage can be identified as to the practical dynamics it accomplishes within the flow of the discussion- its "functions" as Roman Jakobson and Del Hymes⁵ would term it. Among the primary functions are: referring to some external object or phenomenon, expressing an inner emotion or evaluation, maintaining communication and contact between speakers and reflections on what has previously been said. Mapping such functions proved helpful at certain junctures, but was not undertaken systematically for all passages.

We studied the nature of the transition between passages to illuminate the mode of sequencing (turn-taking) within the discussions and sought to identify production cycles of larger chains of passages. Finally, we indicated the major phases of each discussion in its entirety. We take up each of these concepts in turn.

Sequencing is a term we use to depict the quality of turn-taking, and we make a simple distinction between monologic and dialogic sequencing. Monologic sequencing is characterized by series of passages which, while they may be related by reference to common topics, do not actually engage each other. The discussion at that point consists largely of a series of little speeches; the participants are not really talking to each other. Dialogic sequencing, by extension, displays an interconnection between the passages; speakers are responding to each other and developing an intersubjectivity.

Production cycles refer to chains of passages which constitute identifiable segments of collective production within a discussion.

We have all had the intuitive reaction of "This conversation seems to be going nowhere". Here, the collective engagement and the overall intensity falters. Alternatively, the conversation may "take off", commanding and expressing the speakers's involvement.

In the first case, passages tend to build up a "discursive mass", an accumulation of conversational stock. At some point, a sense of overaccumulation is reached ("We're just going 'round in circles") which leads to inertia and eventually decay, if the development is not interrupted. We can note that such production cycles are often accompanied by monologic sequencing.

A discussion can seem to take off via one or more passages

which take the talk off into new directions; this provides a "discursive energy" which revitalizes the discussion and leads it into new production cycles. Thus, we depict successful production cycles as proceeding by a dynamic interplay of accumulation (of discursive mass) and initiation (of discursive energy). Failed cycles gather inertia and may lead to the decomposition of the entire discussion.

Production cycles are useful in mapping the progress of a discussion. It should be emphasized that such cycles are not in any way indicators of the level of agreement between speakers, but rather of the extent of their engagement and success in creating a collective intensity. A heated argument most likely would consist of very successful production cycles.

The major phases of a discussion only become apparent at the holistic level- the discussion in its entirety. In a sense, the phases are the net outcome of the passages, sequencing and production cycles. We identified three major phases present in the discussions.

The transition from one to another could occur over several passages, but seen holistically, the distinctions between the phases were rather clear in most of the discussions. The phases are:

1. Contact and sociability. In the early stages of the discussions, the passages are mostly geared towards adjustment to the situation and to opening and establishing non-committal contact between the participants.
2. Development of a common platform. In the second phase, the participants, in descriptive and often socially pleasant passages, begin to define the basic boundaries of a shared foundation for the topic of discussion. Expressive and evaluative passages emerge as well, largely of a "safe" and non-controversial nature. This establishes the general contours of a collective orientation.
3. Resolution. This phase can come early or late in a discussion, but once reached, there tends to be "no turning back": the discussion has taken on a definitive character. Resolution takes one of three forms:

a) Stagnation. The easy sociability and common platform of the first two phases simply continue, resulting in a climate of consensus, but of a cliché, non-intense quality. The production cycles lack sufficient initiatives to halt over-accumulation, and inertia ultimately sets in.

b) Entropy. This is a more extreme variety of stagnation. The discussion becomes unraveled and disassociated, either because the inertia is too great and culminates in decay or because the common platform of phase 2 is insufficient.

c) Coalescence. This is in essence the outcome of a series of successful production cycles. The speakers, through their involvement and interaction, have made the discussion their own, creating a collective product and, in a sense, creating themselves in this situation.

If this is the framework for analyzing discussions, how would successful activational pedagogy manifest itself? We assume that there is no one single model, so that we must operationalize the concept somewhat loosely. In simple terms, we posit that discussions which resolve themselves in coalescence display a relative success over discussions which do not, and consequently the program versions which prompted the discussions which coalesced can be deemed more activational in their pedagogy.

Moreover, we need not merely dichotomize: we can, again in relative terms, look for a variety of indicators which point to activational pedagogy. Thus, dialogic sequencing would be an indicator of some degree of success. If the discussion consists largely of a series of monologs, clearly the stimulation necessary for involvement with others, or overcoming the hinderances to such involvement, is missing. Likewise, one would expect that there would be production cycles characterized by initiatives which "lead somewhere".

We mentioned earlier that the social psychology of the situation could inhibit relaxed discussion. All the same, we can still treat the program versions as independent variables which help or hinder the discussions in overcoming inhibitions which may be part of the situation. Since all talk is specific to a context, we reason that by holding the situation constant, we should be able to ascertain the relative success of each version.

Let us now look at the actual discussions which took place.

Results: outcome of the discussions

As we indicated above, the key to each discussion lay in its third phase, where resolution is achieved. The resolution for each of the 12 discussions is presented below:

		Resolution		
GL:		A	B	C
Program Version	I.	coalescence	stagnation	stagnation
	II.	coalescence	stagnation	coalescence
	III.	stagnation	entropy	entropy
	IV.	coalescence	coalescence	coalescence

Taking versions II and IV together, five of the six discussions were successful. For version I, two of the three ended in stagnation, while one was successful. And for version III, we find no coalescence at all: one ended in stagnation and two in entropy. In short, the relaxed, well-meaning style of the PL's persona in II and IV unambiguously served to foster activational pedagogy, while the aloof and elitist persona in I worked very poorly; the emotionally intense and unprofessional style of III's persona was an unmitigated disaster for activational pedagogy.

Recalling that for purposes of this study we operationalized "successful activational pedagogy" on the part of the program versions as their relative capacity to foster coalescence in the resolution phase of the group discussions, the results speak with very little ambiguity. The ensemble of variables which define the PL's persona in the different versions resulted in quite clear differences in the discussions, which indicates to us that we are at least on the right track.

On one level, our findings have a practical import, and essentially confirm common sense in regard to the appropriate persona of a PL. The "middle way" here seems to hold the most promise, and the implications for program production would thus be obvious.

However, on another level, the pronounced success of II and IV and the dismal result of III raise some speculative questions about the outer limits of TV's capacity to foster activational pedagogy. For II and IV, despite their easy style which generated a relaxed atmosphere, retain an element of authoritarianism. The fact remains that they display no involvement in the issue and give no indication of the extent or origins of their own knowledge. Viewers never learn what they think; the discussions in a sense are the result of successful "image management" which itself never becomes a topic for the discussants.

Now, we are not pointing to some artificial dichotomy such as "manipulation vs. honesty": all public presentations, be they TV programs, theater, political speeches, or whatever, must use appropriate devices to achieve a desired effect. For example, one does not convey "sincerity" in a theater drama by going out on stage and merely being "sincere" in a spontaneous manner. One makes use of the codes and conventions from the relevant theater genre to convey an impression of sincerity. But with theater, there is an awareness of distance and space between the performance and something we can call "real life", even if during the performance the audience engages in a temporary "suspension of disbelief", as it is called.

Given TV's pervasive presence in our culture, this critical space seems to be shrinking in regard to this medium. While most

viewers can readily identify a TV program as "fiction" if it is indeed fiction, people's capacity to recognize the production devices whereby the impression of reality is conveyed in non-fiction programming is less developed. That is, the televisual esthetic of "realism"- which consists of particular production devices- is generally not treated as a construction/reconstruction but is rather (mis)perceived as "reality", with full psychological and cultural legitimation.

As our society becomes increasingly tele-mediated, it would seem that a concern with pedagogy- both activational and traditional- would want to focus attention on, and develop awareness of, how TV, as a central feature of the public sphere, functions to structure our perceptions of what is "real".

The question becomes how well TV itself can do this. As a cultural form, TV has fostered certain sets of expectations: audiences want TV journalism to create the impression of neutrality, certitude, and authority. (Of course, audiences these days like this to be packaged in a friendly manner; hence our versions II and IV promote more discussion than version I). As a social institution, however, TV has a certain position to defend. It understandably does not want to engage in self-revelation to the point where audiences can "see through" it and come to treat it in a skeptical manner. (Again, most viewers would not want this; it would undermine the general sense of orientation and security which TV now often provides). Thus, activational pedagogy on TV cannot invite reflection on the source of the pedagogy, namely TV itself.

We perhaps exaggerate the dilemma here for purposes of demonstrating a theme. The question is not so clear-cut. Yet, activational pedagogy on TV must take into account the status and function of TV in society, and the limitations this imposes. A teacher in the classroom, through his/her self-revelation, can demonstrate the dynamics and limitations of his/her own learning process. This is difficult on TV, where reference is seldom made to the origins or boundaries of knowledge.

It seems, then, that TV must largely maintain a "cool upper hand" toward the audience, avoiding excessive self-revelation as well as emotional intensity on the part of PL's. Attempts to enhance activational pedagogy must work within these restrictions. This conclusion, based as it is on this study, must of course be tentative, but it would serve as a foundation for hypotheses in future research.

Two final, cautionary notes: first, we operationalized the notion of successful activational pedagogy as a program's capacity

to stimulate group discussion, paying minimal attention to what was actually said. Clearly, activational pedagogy, with its intellectual roots in the in the critical resistance to hegemony, must at some point also take into account the content of discussion. The formalism of structure is but a starting point, not the final destination. There is no guarantee that what is being said at the site of reception is not reproducing social relations of domination.

Secondly, the fact that a group discussion ensued- that people spoke- we generally view as a positive step. But we would not claim that this is invariably so under all circumstances; eg., Herbert Marcuse's notion of "repressive tolerance" still retains some of its compelling quality. To participate in a public sphere is to accord it, in some way, a degree of legitimacy. In some situations, an emancipatory strategy might, at least in the short run, counsel silence.

Appendix on method: the analysis of spoken interaction

At present, the analysis of spoken interaction (ASI) is by no means a truly established research approach, with fully agreed upon methods. In fact, there is a plurality of investigative strategies. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that ASI is in the process of emerging from several more established fields in the social and human sciences, each of which has its own points of departure. Among these antecedents to ASI are sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, structural anthropology, and semiology. Also, the micro-sociology of the late Erving Goffman is an especially important contribution to the development of ASI.

Yet if its origins and procedures are diversified, there is still some unity of premises and purposes. Common to all approaches to ASI is a commitment to elucidate meaning from the standpoint of those who produced the spoken text. Meaning is no longer seen as residing at some literal level of the text, but must be probed in the text's latent structure, its internal coherence, the relationship between parts and whole, and in the social contexts in which the text is generated.

Further, the question of meaning is seen as an active process of collectively "making sense", of "constructing social reality" at the subjective level in relation to perceived specific objective circumstances. In a wider perspective, what this now implies is that all language use is always/already socially implicated; none is privileged or more "foundational". We might add that this applies

even to the discourses of analytic philosophy, journalism, and social research itself: they too are shaped by social circumstances, their interests in specific societal arrangements are not indifferent, they too express and foster modes of consciousness.

The upshot of this in terms of research is that the question of meaning is now treated in a new way. With the multi-dimensionality of language and the importance of social context, meaning is seen as more protean and elusive. It resides within dynamic force-fields; it is always in flux, as is History itself.

This fosters a new modesty and a new excitement at the same time. The modesty is understandable: in the light of these developments, researchers must pay more attention to their own assumptions, concepts and discourse, as well as to the data-gathering situation itself. It is a bit more difficult nowadays to gleefully speak about "objectivity" if one investigating questionss having to do with meaning. What is at bottom here is not so much "relativism" as the general historicity of understanding and the equivocal character of language.⁷

At the same time, these developments are exciting precisely because many taken for granted phenomena now can hold a new fascination. Thus, seemingly trivial everyday conversation can be studied as a concrete site at which people in part create themselves and their social world, as well as reproduce/resist hegemony.

From this background, we can readily see that ASI has little in common with traditional linguistics. The concern for ASI is not with language as a formal and abstract system- with phonological and syntactical variables, transformational "rules", etc- but with language as it is concretely used, language as "social events".

ASI can focus on an enormously wide variety of talk: from ordinary conversation in all its settings to discussions under more structured situations (as was the case in our study) and very formalized exchanges in well-defined contexts (eg. job interviews or sub-cultural rituals.) In all cases, research has the task of illuminating meaning from the perspective of the speakers and thus extrapolating on their consciousness.

This suggests that ASI must largely be a form of qualitative research. Quantitative elements may certainly have significance, but the key to a fruitful analysis will lie in its ability to "read" the data in an insightful manner.

In terms of research in journalism and the mass media, we take the view that ASI can be very helpful in further exploring the inter-

face of audiences and the media at the point of reception, where people encounter and experience mass communication in everyday life. We see ASI as offering a complementary approach to more traditional kinds of studies, for ex. interviews on "uses and gratifications". ASI provides a somewhat different port of entry into the question of meaning of media experiences for audiences; it can potentially burrow deeper and elucidate the significance of media output beyond the question of immediate "satisfactions" which audience members may derive.

ASI is still in the process of developing; we feel encouraged by our experiences in this study. However, there are a number of difficulties which we encountered and which seem to be common for this type of work. We summarize them as a record of our experiences.

All types of ASI involve recording and transcribing spoken speech into a printed text. In some cases, the recording may involve a video component as well, if physical behavior is deemed relevant. The analysis, then, is based on the tapes and the transcripts, and may go in a variety of directions, depending upon the orientation of the researchers and the questions they pose to the material.

Current recording technology, if it is not to be excessively sophisticated and expensive, usually requires the participants to remain stationary and not be too numerous. A group not totally more than 5 or 6, seated around a table or in a living room, with an omni-directional microphone, is ideal. Of course other versions are possible; it is a question of maximizing the recording of the voices and minimizing other noise, to facilitate transcription.

Too many participants/voices make transcription difficult, as it may be hard to distinguish the different speakers. Conveniently enough, most households are of manageable size in this regard.

The amount of recorded data will vary with the nature of the project. For example, studies on micro-variations of speech use, aimed for the development of theory, may need very little data. For us, who were concerned with the larger patterns of conversational development, much more was required. There tends to be an inverse relationship between the size of the transcript and the level of detail in the analysis. Thus, a "macro" study like ours, with over 200 pages of transcript, aims for a holistic perspective to map the essential contours of the discussion. This same data could be interrogated in other ways, and require several volumes to answer questions of a more penetrating kind.

To record people while they are speaking obviously raises the issue of the effects of the microphone and what it does to define the situation in which the talking takes place. As we mentioned earlier, that the "mike effect" is held constant for the groups recorded helps to neutralize its impact. Yet we also noticed that awareness of the microphone diminishes quite rapidly, once people start talking to each other; in fact, we had anticipated that more apparent notice would be given to the microphone. It may be that in other studies, for example where recordings are done more "in the field", that the mike would be more intrusive.

The transcription of spoken conversation is a laborious task; there is no question about that. It becomes more difficult as the number of speakers increases. Transcription is demanding and time-consuming; a half-hour of discussion on a tape can easily fill 20 pages of double-spaced text. At times the talk may be somewhat inaudible, with rapid turn-taking and simultaneous talking.

Aside from these considerations, there is also the problem that at present there is no universally accepted system for rendering the common features of spoken discourse into textual form. Such aspects as tempo, hesitations, ironic vocal tones, etc. can be important, yet difficult to transcribe in a consistent manner. Hence the use of the tape to complement the text is most advisable.

For the inexperienced transcriber, there are also the problems of "auditory hallucinations". In daily conversation, we often filter out and don't hear such verbal punctuation such as "well, uh, umm" and "you know". There is a tendency to subconsciously "edit" the transcript accordingly.

Yet, despite these and other potentially problematic elements, we feel that ASI is a fruitful line of research which can probe into the audience-media interface and yield new insights. While it may help us to answer some of our questions it will undoubtedly lead us to formulate new ones as well.

NOTES

1. Peter Dahlgren, "Tuning in the News: TV Journalism and the Process of Ideation", Skriftserie, School of Journalism.
2. The classic text here remains Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York: Seabury, 1970.
3. Michael Stubbs, Discourse Analysis, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, p 219. Stubbs provides a helpful overview of the current state of research in this area.
4. Among the inspirational sources for our methodology are: Erving Goffman, Frame Analysis, New York: Harper, 1974, and Forms of Talk, Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981; Warren Handel, Ethnomethodology: How People Make Sense, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982; Stubbs, op.cit.
5. Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics", in T. Sebeok, ed., Style and Language, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1960, and Del Hymes, "The Ethnography of Speaking", in M.J. Fishman, ed., Readings in the Sociology of Language, The Hague: Mouton, 1968.
6. Herbert Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance", R.P. Wolff, et al, A Critique of Pure Tolerance, Boston: Beacon, 1969.
7. Much of the recent literature on these themes is discussed in Richard Bernstein, Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

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